

Heart-Humiliation:

O R,

Miscellany Sermons

Preached upon some choice Texts,
at several Solemn Occasions: Ne-
ver before Printed.

By that Eminent Preacher of the Gospel, Mr.
Hugh Binning, late Minister at *Govan*.

*Jer. 4. 14. O Jerusalem, wash thine
Heart from Wickedness, that thou
mayest be Saved, &c.*

G L A S G O W,

Printed by *Robert Sanders*, and are to be Sold in
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Christian Reader,

THis Holy Preacher of the Gospel, had so many Convictions upon his Spirit of the Necessity of the Duties of Humiliation and Mourning, and of Peoples securing the Eternal Interest of their Souls for the Life to come, by fleeing in to **JESUS CHRIST** for remission of Sins in His Blood, that he made these the very **SEARS** of his Sermons in many publick Humiliations, as if it had been the one thing which he concerned the Lord was calling for in his Days. A clear Evidence whereof thou shalt find manifested in these following Sermons upon choice Texts, wherein the Author endeavoureth, not only to lay before thee, the Necessity of these Duties of Soul humiliation, but also sheweth thee the Gospel-manner of performing them, the many Soul-advantages flowing from the serious exercise of them, and the many Soul-destroying prejudices following upon the neglect of them: But above all, thou shalt find him so fully setting forth the sinfulness of Sin, and the utter emptiness of self, as may convince the most Pharisaically, elated Spirits, and make them cry out with Ezra, Chapter 9. 6. O my GOD, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my Face to Thee, my God; for our Iniquities are increased over our Head, and our Trespasts is grown up unto the Heavens. Here thou mayest read such pregnant demonstrations of the Righteousness and Equity of the Lord's dealing

To the Reader.

dealing even in His severest Punishments inflicted upon the Children of Men, as may silence every whisperer against Providence, and make them say, as Lam. 3. 22. It is of the LORD's Mercies we are not consumed, even because His Compassions fail not. And Lastly, Thou shalt perceive the inconceivable fitness and fulness of CHRIST as a Saviour, and His never enough to be admired tenderness and condescending willingness to accept of Humble, Heart-broken, and Heart-panting Sinners after Him, with such plainness of Speech demonstrat, as may enable the most Bruised-reed to quench all the Fiery-darts of the Devil, whereby he laboureth to affright them from making application to JESUS for Salvation. Now that the LORD would make those, and such like labours of His faithful Servants useful and advantageous to thy Soul (Christian Reader) is the Prayer of

Thy Servant in the Gospel of our
dearest Lord and Saviour,
A. S.



At

At a Publick Fast in July, first
Sabbath, 1650.

S E R M O N I.

Dent. 32. 4, 5, 6, 7. *He is the Rock, His Work is perfect: for all His Ways are Judgement, &c.*

THere are Two Things may comprehend all Religion, the Knowledge of GOD, and of our selves: these are the Principles of Religion, and are so nearly conjoynd together, that the one cannot be truly without the other, much less *separately*; It is no wonder that *Moses* crave Attention, and to the end he may attain it from an hard hearted deaf People, that he turns to the Heavens and to the Earth, as it were, to make them the more inexcusable. The Matter of his Song is both Divine and Necessary, throughout it all he insists upon these two, to discover what they were to themselves, and what God was to them; he parallels their way with his way, that they might see the infinite distance, might have other Thoughts of themselves, and of him both. It is a Song, it is true, but a sad Song: The People of God's mourning should be of this nature, mixed, not pure sorrow.

It's hard to determine, whether there be more matter of Consolation or Lamentation, when such a comparison is made to the life: when God's Goodness and our Evils are set before our Eyes, which may most work the Heart to such Affections. Nay, I think it is possible, they may both contribute to both these. Is there any more abasing and humbling Principle than Love? How shall the Sinner loath it self in His Glorious Presence? Will not so much Kindness and Mercy so often repeated, as oft as it is mentioned, wound the Heart in which there is any Tenderneſs? And again, when a Soul beholds its own ingratitude and evil requital of the Lord's kindness, how vile and how perverse it is, how muſt it loath it ſelf in duſt and aſhes? Yet is not all ground of hope removed, ſuch a ſad ſight may make mixed Affections: if we be ſo perverse and evil, then He is infinitely Good, and His Mercy and Goodneſs is above our Evils; if we have dealt ſo with Him, yet is He the Rock that changes not, He is a God of Truth, and will not fail in His Promise. Nay, tho' it be ſad to be ſo evil, void of all goodneſs, yet may the Soul bleſs Him for evermore, that hath choſen this way to glorifie His Name, to build up His praiſe upon our ruin; May not a Soul thus glory in ſad Infirmities, becauſe His Strength is perfected in them, and made manifeſt? May not a Soul chooſe Emptineſs in it ſelf, that it may be beholden to His Fullneſs? How reſreſhing a view might the ſaddeſt look on our Miſery and Emptineſs be, if we did behold His purpoſe of manifeſting His Glory in it? Ye ſee here a comparison inſtituted between two very unequal parties, *God and Man*, there is no likeneneſs, let be equality in it, yet there is almoſt an equality in unlikeneneſs. The one is infinitely good and perfect; well, what ſhall we compare to Him? *Who is like Thee, O God, among the gods?* Angels goodneſs, their perfection and innocency, hath not ſuch a name and appearance in His ſight; ſo then, there can be no comparison made this way, let no fleſh glory in his ſight

fight in any thing, but, *let him that gloriously glories in the Lord*; for in the sight of the glorious Lord, all things do disappear and vanish. But surely nothing, tho' most perfect, can once come within terms of reckoning beside him for any worth: *Moses* sees nothing to set beside God, that will appear in its own greatness and native colours; but the Creatures Evil and Sin, and if this be not infinite absolutely, or equal to His Goodness, yet it comes nearest the borders of infiniteness: So then, is God most perfect? Is He infinite in Goodness, in Truth, in Righteousness? &c. And so infinite, that before Him nothing appears good? *None good save one, that is God.* Yet we may find another infinite, and it is in evil sinful Man; and these two contraries set beside other, do much illustrate each other. It's true, that His Grace superabounds, and His Goodness is more than the Creatures Sinfulness; yet I say, you shall not find any thing that cometh nearer the infiniteness and degrees of his Goodness, than the sinfulness of Men; How much the more Glorious he appears, so much the more vile and base doth it appear.

If ye did indeed ponder and weigh these two *Verses* in the balance of the Sanctuary, would not your Heart secretly ask this Question within you, Do I thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise? Yea, would ye not account your selves mad to *forsake the Fountain of Living Waters, and dig broken Cisterns to your selves?* O! of how great moment were this to humble your Souls to Day? This Day ye are called to Mourning and Afflicting your Souls. Now I know not a more suitable Exercise for a Day of Humiliation, or a Principle that may more humble and abase your Souls, than the serious and deep consideration of these Two, What God is, and hath been to us, and what we are, and have proved to Him; what hath made so many formal Humiliations that have provoked him to anger? Certainly we do not either seriously think on any of these, or if on one of them, yet not on both; the most part

of you know no more in such a Day, but a name and ceremony of a little abstinence. *Is this to Sanctifie a Day to the Lord?* when ye do not so much as the People, who bowed down their Head for a Day, and spread Sackcloth under them. I wonder how ye think to pacifie His Wrath, and are not rather afraid of adding Fuel and Oyl to the Flame of His Indignation. Ye come here and sit as in former times, and what do ye more either here or at home? There is no Soul-affliction, no not for a Day; the most part of you are no more affected with your Sins, and His Judgements, than if none of these things were. Now, I pray you, what shall the Lord say to us, when He speaks to the *Jews* in such terms, Isa. 58. 7. *Is it such a Fast that I have chosen, a Man for a Day to afflict his Soul?* And do ye so much as afflict it for a Day, or at all? Is this then the Fast that He will choose, to abstain from your Breakfast in the Morning, and at Night to compensate the want of it, and no more? Is this an acceptable Day to the Lord? The Lord upbraids the *Jews*, *Will thou call this a Fast?* And what reason have me to ask you, Is it possible ye think ye do indeed Fast to the Lord? I cannot think that the most part of you dare say, That ever ye Fasted, or Afflicted your Souls.

Always here is the way, if we consider it, to spend a Day acceptably to the Lord, enter in a serious consideration of his Majesty, and your selves; study on these two, till ye find your Hearts bear the stamp of them, enlarge your Hearts in the Thoughts of them; both are infinite, His Goodness and Power, and Mercy, and your Sin and Misery, no end of them; whatsoever ye find good in God, write up answerably to it, so much Evil and Sin in your selves, and the Land: and what Evil ye find in your selves, and the Land, write up so much Goodness and Mercy in his account. All the names of his praise would be so many grounds of your confusion in your selves, and would imprint so many Notes of reproach and disgrace upon the Creature, found

so contrary to Him. This is even the Everlasting God calls us to this Day, to consider his ways to us, and our ways to him, how he hath walked, and how we have walked; because ye lose the sight of these two, He sends Affliction, because in our Prosperity and Peace we forget God, and so our selves; as ye find this People did, *when they waxed fat, they kicked against Him, and forgot that He was their Rock*; we are so much taken up with our own ease and peace, that we do not observe him in his dealings; therefore doth the Lord trouble our Peace, removes these things we are taken up with, makes a publick proclamation of Affliction, and blessed be his Name, whose and is Gracious, he means this, it is the Proclamation of all his Judgements, turn your Eyes off your present ease here, consider what I am, and what your selves are. No Nation so soon buries the memory of his Mercies, O how soon are they drowned in oblivion, and we forget our own provocations, as suddenly, therefore must he write our Iniquities upon a Rod, that we may read them in great Letters, and he writes his former Goodness in the change of his Dispensations, when his way to us changes, that we may know what is past. This is the great design that God hath in the World, to declare Himself, and His own Name, that it may be wondred and admired at by Men, and this cannot be but by our ruin, abasing us in the dust; He therefore uses to flain the pride of all glory, that his alone may appear without spot. This is then the great Controversie of God with Men and Nations in all Generations, they will not see him alone exalted, and will not bow before him, and see their own vileness. Why dath he overturn Kingdoms and Thrones? Why doth he shake Nations so often? Here it is, God's Controversie will never cease, till all Men acknowledge him in his Highness and Holiness, as the Sole Fountain of all Life, and find themselves vile, less than nothing, nay, worse than nothing and emptiness. If ye would then have God

at peace with the Land, and your selves? here is the compendious way, set him up a Throne of Eminency in your Hearts, and put your selves in the dust, take with your own guiltiness and naughtiness, and impossibility to help your selves, in your selves; hold these two still in your Eyes, that He may be alone exalted.

Look how unequal a match, verse 4, 5. *He is the Rock*, a Rock indeed; if we speak of strength, lo, he is strong; if of stability, he is *the Lord*, and *changes not, the Ancient of Days*. Hath not thou heard and considered this, that *the Almighty faints not, and wearies not*? He holds forth Himself in such a Name to His People, a ready, All-sufficient, perpetual and enduring Refuge to all that Trust in him, and flie unto him as a Rock higher than they; and this is the Foundation that the Church is builded on, *against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail*. God's Omnipotency for defence, his Eternity, Faithfulness and Unchangeableness to make that sure, his Mercy and Goodness makes a hole in that Rock to enter in, a ready access for poor shipwrack'd and broken Men, who have no other Refuge. This is our Rock on which the Church is builded, *Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. 10. 4. Matth. 16. 18. God were inaccessible in himself, an impregnable Rock; how would Sinners overcome him, and enter into him, to be saved from Wrath? Nay, but Jesus Christ hath made a plain way and path, out of the Waves of Sin and Misery, into this Rock higher than we; and so the poor Soul that is lost in its own Eyes, and sees no Refuge, is forced to quite the broken ship of created confidence, for fear of perishing; how doth it find a door in this Rock to enter? And there is Water to drink of, *a Fountain of Living Waters* comes out of it, and that is *Christ*.

Now all these Names of his praise rub so many marks of Shame on his People; O how sad is the secret reproof and exhortation contained in this commendation of God! He hath been a Rock to us, our Refuge that we fled unto, and found sure; for as in
our

our straits, we mounted upon his Power, and were supported, when *the Floods lifted up their Waves*, yet have we left our Rock, gone out from our strength; He offers Himself a Rock unto us, his Fulness and All-sufficiency for us, and yet *we leave the Fountain of Living Waters, and dig broken Cisterns*; had rather choose our own broken ship to toss up and down into. He abides for ever the same; tho' we change, He changes not. How may it reprove our backslidings, that we depart from our Rock, and where shall we find a Refuge in the Day of Indignation? Is there any created Mountain, but some Floods of the time will cover? Therefore it is folly and madness to forsake this Rock that is still above the floods, *He is mightier than the noise of many Waters*. It may reprove our Unbelief, we change our Faith according to His Dispensation, our Faith ebbs and flows as the Tide of His Providence, and thus we are as Sticks floating in the Water, tossed up and down; but would ye be established as Mount Sion? Would ye be unmoveable in the midst of great Waters, that they shall not come near unto you? Then by all means get upon this Rock, that abides unmoved in the midst of the Waves, tho' they should beat on it, and the Wind blow, yet it is proof of all tempest; all things might be driven up and down about you with the Lord's Dispensation, but ye should abide the same, and might look round about you on the troubled Sea of Mens Minds, of Lands and Estates. If you come here, ye may make shipwrack, but ye shall not drown, tho' ye lose the Creatures comfort and defence, yet ye are on your Rock, which is established before the Rocks and Mountains: You may be sure of Salvation, He that made the Rocks and Winds, and Seas, is your Rock.

His Work is perfect] As He doth not trouble Himself, when all is troubled about Him; *so He keeps him also in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him*; so also what he doth among Men, tho' it cannot pass without Man's Censure, yet it is in it self

self perfect, compleat, without spot, or defect. What is the Subject of all Mens Questions, Doubts, Complaints, Censures, Expostulations, and such like, of which the World is full? It's some one Work of God or other; there is no Work of his Providence, but some Man finds a fault in it, and would be at the mending of it. *usque Deus compluit, omnibus placet*, If he give Rain he displeases many, if he withhold it again, we are as little pleased. The reason of all this misconstruction is, we look on his Work by parcels, and takes it not whole and intire, so it is perfect, and cannot be made better. *His Works are perfect* in relation to the beginning and original of them, his own everlasting purpose; Men often bring forth works by guess, by their purpose, so no wonder it answer not their desire; but *known to him are all his Works from the beginning*, and so he doth nothing in time, but what was his everlasting pleasure; often we purpose well; and resolve perfectly, but our practice is a crible, execution of it is maimed and imperfect; but all his Works are carved out, and done just as he designed them, without the least alteration; and if it had not been well, would he have thought on it so, and resolved it before hand? *His Works are perfect* in relation to the end to which he appointed them. It may be, it is not perfect in it self, a Blind-eye is not so perfect as a Seeing-eye; nay, but in relation to the glory of his Name, who hath a purpose to declare his Power by restoring that sight, it is as perfect. And in this sense, all the imperfection of the Creatures and Creation, all of them are perfect Works, for they accomplish the end wherefore they were sent; and so the Night declares his Name, and utters a Speech as well as the Day, the Winter as the Summer, the Wilderness as the fruitful Field; for what is the perfection of the Creature, but in as far as it accomplishes his purpose and end, as the maker of it serves himself with it? and therefore all his Work is perfect, for it is all framed in Wisdom, to his own ends, in number, measure and weight; it is so exactly agreeing to that, that
you

you could not imagine it better. Again, *His Work is perfect*, if we take it all altogether; and do not cut it in parcels, and look on it so. Is there any workmanship beautiful, if ye look upon it in the doing, while the Timber lies in one part, and the Stones in another? Is that a perfect building, when ye see one Arm here, another there, and a Leg scattered beside them? Hath that Image any comeliness? Certainly no; but look upon these united, and then they are perfect; Letters and Syllables make no sense, till ye conjoyn them in Words, and Words in Sentences. Even so is it here, if ye look on the Day alone; the light of it being perpetual would weary us, the Night alone would be more so; but the interchange of them is pleasant, Day and Night together make a distinct language of God's praise; So God hath set Prosperity and Adversity the one over against the other, one of them it may be, seems imperfect, nay, but it is a perfect Work that is made up of both; Spots in the Face commend the beauty of the rest of it.

If ye would then look upon God's Work aright, look on it in the Sanctuaries Light, and ye shall say, *He hath done all well*. Joyn the end with the beginning, and behold, they agree very well; Many things among us seem out of order, many things uncompleat; The Reformation of *England*, how great obstruction was in the way of it? Is that now a perfect work? Yes, certainly; for if we knew his end and purpose, it is very well, and could not be bettered by the Art of all Men; *His Thoughts are far above our Thoughts*. The prosperous and uninterrupted success of that party in *England*, is it a perfect work? Yes, certainly; for if ye could behold their end, we would say so, *they are set in slippery places, their Foot shall slide in due time*.

Entertain this Thought in your Heart, that He hath done all well, let not your secret Thoughts so much as call them in question, if once ye question, ye will quickly censure them; hold this persuasion, that nothing can be better than what he doth.

nothing can be added, and nothing diminished from them, He doth all in number, weight and measure, it's so exactly correspondent to his purpose and design, as if it were weighed out, and measured out for that end.

Let this secretly reprove your Hearts, the perfection of his Works stains our works, O how imperfect are they? And which is worse, how impudent and bold are we to censure his, and absolve our own? If he have a hand in our work, yet these imperfect works, are perfect in regard of him, as we have a hand in his perfect Works, yet his perfect Works are imperfect in regard of us.

S E R M O N II.

Deut. 32. 4, 5. He is the Rock, His Work is perfect; for all His Ways are Judgement: a God of Truth, and without Iniquity, Just and Right is He. 5. They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of His Children, &c.

THere are none can behold their own vileness, as it is, but in the sight of God's Glorious Holiness: Sin is Darknes, and neither sees it self, nor any thing else, therefore must his Light shine to discover this Darknes. If we abide within our selves, and Men like our selves, we cannot wisely judge our selves; our dim sparkle will not make all the imperfections and spots appear; but if Men would come forth in the Presence of His Majesty, who *turns Darknes into Light*, and before whom Hell is naked, O how base and vile would they appear in their own Eyes? Is it any wonder, that the multitude of you see not your selves, when Holy *Isaiah* and *Job*, had this Lesson to learn? *Isaiah* gets a discovery of his own uncleanness in the sight of God's Glorious Holiness, *Chap. 6. 5.* which I think made all his former light darknes; He cries

Out,

out; *Unclean*, as if he had never known it before:—
And so *Job*, *Since I saw Thee, I abhorred my self in
dust and ashes*: Ye hear much of him, and it doth
not abase you; but if ye saw him, ye would not
abide your selves; you would prefer the dust you
trade on to your selves. Ye who know most, there
is a mystery of Iniquity in your Hearts, that is not
yet discerned; ye are but yet in the coast of that
bottomless Sea of abomination and vileness. Among
all the aggravations of Sin, nothing doth so demon-
strate the folly, yea, the madness of it, as the per-
fection, goodness, and absolute unspottedness of God.
It's this that takes away all pretence of excuse, and
leaves the sinner nothing, no place to hide its con-
fusion and nakedness, and shame into. And there-
fore is it that *Moses*, when he would convince this
People of their ways, and make them inexcusable,
he draws the parallel of God's ways, and their ways,
declares what God is, how absolutely perfect in
Himself, and in His Works, had given no cause of
provocation to them to depart from him: And then,
how odious must their departing be? When both are
painted on a broad before their Eyes; it makes Sin
become exceeding sinful. When the Lord would
pierce the Hearts of his People, and engrave a chal-
lenge with the point of a Diamond, He uses this as
His Pen, *Have I been a Wilderness to Israel, a Land
of Darkness? why says my People, We are Lords, we
will come no more to thee? Jer. 2. 31. What Iniquity
have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone
from me, and walked after vanity? Jer. 2. 5.*

There are Two Things in Sin that exceedingly
abuse the Creature, the Iniquity of it, and folly and
madness of it: It's contrare to all equity and rea-
son to depart from him that hath made us, and given
us a Law, to whom we are by so many obligations
tied. But what is the folly and madness of it? To
depart from the Fountain of living Waters, and dig
broken Cisterns that can hold none, verse 13. This
is a thing that the Heavens may be astonished at,
and if the Earth had sense to understand such a
thing.

thing, the whole fabrick of it would tremble for horror at such a madness and folly of reasonable Souls: And this evil hath two evils in it, we forsake Life, and love Death, go from him, and choose vanity. It's great Iniquity to depart without an offence on his part; He may appeal all our Consciences, and let them sit down and examine his way most narrowly, *What Iniquity have ye found in me?* What cause have ye to leave me? But when withall, He is a Living Fountain, He is our Glory, He is a Fruitful Land, a Land of Light, our Ornament and Attire; in a word, our Life, and our Consolation, our Happiness, and our Beauty; what word shall be found, to express the extreame madness of Men, to depart from such an one? and change their glory into that which doth not profit? If either he were not a Fountain of living Waters, or if there were any Fountain beside, that could yield Water to satisfy the unsatiable desires of Men, it were more excusable, but what shadow shall be found, to cover such an Iniquity, that is both infinite Sin and incomparable loss? It's the Scriptures stile given to natural Men, *Fools and Simple*, all Sin hath folly in it, but the People of God's departing from him, hath extremity of folly in it, beside Iniquity, because they do imbrace a dunghill in stead of a Throne, they make the maddest exchange that can be imagined, Glory for Shame, Life for Death, at least Consolation and Peace, for vanity and vexation and anguish of Spirit.

If ye would be duly affected with the sight of your own Evils, look upon them in this consideration, and in the view of God your large portion, ye will be forced to confess your selves *Beasts in His Sight*, Psal 73. 22. Oh that Men would consider how good and blessed the Lord is, how he is alone, and nothing beside him in Heaven and Earth, all broken Cisterns, all dung and unprofitable, all vanity and vexation, he only Self-sufficient, all others insufficient, and therefore a proportioned good for our necessity and desires, and I am sure ye would be constrained

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strained to cry out with *David*, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, or in Earth beside thee? It is good for me to draw near to God.* Ye would look on drawing near, and walking with him, and before him, not only as the most reasonable thing, but the best thing, most beautiful for you, most profitable for you, and all other ways would be looked on as the ways of Death.

His Work is perfect] The Lord looked, and behold all was good that was made; so it was at first, the Fabrick of this World was an exquisite and perfect work, a suitable demonstration of his infinite Wisdom, wonderful in all the parts of it, and in the unity and harmony of the whole: But so also his Work of Providence is perfect. Divine Wisdom hath framed and contrived all, and it cannot be better. If any thing seem imperfect in it self, yet it is perfect, in relation to his glorious ends he directs it unto; and so would we look on all the works among us; if any thing seemed a spot and disgrace of the Creation, certainly the Sin of Men and Angels; Nay, but even that is so ordered by his Holy Sovereignty, that in relation to his Majesty, it may be called a perfect work. If ye do but consider what a glorious high Throne he hath erected to himself for Justice and Judgement to be the Habitation of it, and Mercy and Truth to go before it, upon the ruins of defaced Man, what a Theatre of Justice he hath erected upon the Angels falls, ye would call it as perfect a work as in the World. His work is one in the World, subordinate to one great design of manifesting his own glorious Justice and Mercy, Omnipotency and Wisdom. Now what do ye see of it, but parcels, tho' ye comprehend all your time in one thought, yet certainly ye cannot judge it aright, for it is but one work that all the several buildings and castings down, all the several dispensations of his Providence from the beginning to the end make up; and when we think upon these disjoyned, limit our consideration within the bounds of our own time; can we rightly apprehend it? Nay, which

is worse, we use to have no more within the compass of our Thought, but some present thing, and how much more do we err then? What beauty, what perfection, can such a small part have? But it's present to him, who beholds with a glance all these parts, tho' succeeding in many Generations, he sees it altogether, joins the end with the beginning, sees the first mould, the first Foundation-stone, and the last compleating, all flowing from himself, and returning thither, and ending in himself: He hath made an interchange in Nature, which might teach us; the Night alone hath no beauty, nay, but it beautifies the Day: Your darkest Hours and Tempests, publick and personal, are they perfect works? Yes certainly, if ye compound them with your Sun-shines, and calms; several colours make Pictures beautiful: the one is as needful as the other. And if ye did consider your profit more than your honour and pleasure, ye would say so. He doth not model his Works according to our fancy to please us, but our good to profit us, and He is wiser than we; and so then it is the most perfect work in it self, that possibly displeaseth us most. Therefore ye would judge of his dealing by another Rule, nor your Satisfaction; for please you, and perish you. If he spared the Rod, he should hate us indeed; fond love is real hatred. Christians, if ye would judge his Works by his Word, and not by your sense, by your well, and not by your will, certainly ye would say as the Men did of Christ, *He hath done all well*; the World would discover to you a perfection, even in imperfection, a perfection in infirmities, that ye should not only rejoyce in them, but glory in them: *Most gladly therefore will I glory*, &c. saith *Paul*. Are Infirmitie a perfect work? Or is the suffering of *Paul* to be buffeted and tempted, a perfect of work? What comfort is in it? Yes much, Infirmitie alone are Infirmitie indeed; nay, but Infirmitie in me, and strength in *Jesus*; weakness in me, and strength dwelling in me, these make up one perfect work; that could as little

want

want the infirmities as the strength; the glory of God and our well and consolation requires the one, as well as the other; it could not be compleat without any of them. What do ye think of the Times now? Are *Englands* Apostacy and *Irelands* Desolation perfect works? That great work of Reformation, that seemed to be above our Shoulders, it's now razed to the ground, and the very Foundations removed. Is Deformation a perfect work? Certainly, if we look on these things in the Scriptures light, and consider them in relation to him who is the Chief Builder, and doth in Heaven and Earth what he pleaseth, that Deformation is a perfect work, tho' not a perfect Reformation, tho' we could not inform you of the perfection of it, yet the general might silence us, all this shall be no miss, no marr in the end. His work at the end of accomplis shall appear so compleat, as if it had never had interruption. He is wise, and knows what he doth, if this were not for his glory, and his Peoples good, certainly it should not be. Was not the Peoples wandering in the Wilderness Forty Years, a most strange work? a longer interruption of the expected and begun Voyage out of *Egypt*? What humane reason would have stiled this work with perfection? Did they not often murmur against it? Yet *Moses* calls this a perfect work also. What if the Lord be digging the ground deeper in *England*, that the Foundation may be the surer? What if he be on a work of Judgement, filling the Cup of many deluded blasphemers, that he may have another Cup of Wrath prepared? What if this be his great purpose, to execute Vengeance upon a Profane Generation, that will not abide the very name and form of Godliness, by these who pretend to the name of it as their honour? What if the Lord hath defaced all that this Kingdom was instrumental in building of in *England*, that He alone may have the Glory in a Second Temple more glorious? Many things there may be in his Mind, and He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? And what His Soul desireth, even

even that he doth; and this may be enough to satisfie us: *He sees and knows all his works from the beginning*; and without all controversie he hath provided it so, that the reproach of his Name shall be made up with the more shining of his Glory, and the afflictions of his People shall be compensated with Songs of deliverance. May ye not give him so much credit as ye would give to a skilful Man in his own Trade? Ye know it is his Name, *Excellent in counsel, and wonderful in working*; then take his Work, expound it according to his Word, and not your Apprehension. It may be his Work appears not excellent, nay, but if ye knew his Counsel, ye would think it so. His wonderful Counsel makes all his Works excellent, and therefore do not take upon you to judge his Works, unless ye could wade the depth of his Counsels, else ye declare yourselves to be both ignorant and presumptuous. *There is a time to build, and a time to cast down, a time for everything*, saith the Wise Man: Now, I say, He knows the time and season, he does every thing in his time. If ye come by a Workman that is casting down a House, that in your appearance seems good, would ye condemn him presently? No, but stay till ye see what he will do next, wait till the due time, and when ye see a better piece of Workmanship, on that ground ye shall absolve him. Tho' God often change His Work, do not think he changes his Counsel and Purposes as men do. No, *He is in one mind, and who can turn him?* Therefore he had that change in his mind when he made the work, when he erected such a Throne, he had this in his mind to cast it down within such a space, and so his change his throwing down, is as perfect in his mind as his building up. Ye have large and big apprehensions of temporal Kingdoms and Crowns of Government, and such like, as if they were great, yea, only things; but they are not so to him: All this World, and its standing, all the Kingdoms and their affairs are not his great work and business; He hath one great work, *the bringing of many Sons to Glory*, and completing

of Jesus Christ, building of that glorious Mystical Building, the Holy Temple made up of living Stones, of which Christ is the Foundation and Chief Corner-stone both; and it's this that he attends to most; other works among Men, tho' they have more noise, they are less concerned; all these are but in the by, and subservient to His great design, and like the scaffolds of a Building, that are (it may be) sometime very needful. Nay, but when the Building is compleated, he shall remove all these, he hath no more use of them; *Kings shall be thy Nurse-fathers, Kings shall bow to thee.* He is not much concerned in a Government, nor in Governours; but for His little Flocks sake; and if these were gathered, all these shall have an end, and the Flock alone abide for ever.

And all His Ways are Judgement] This is to the same purpose, His Ways and His Works are one, and this is the perfection of his Work, that it is all right and equal, whether they be in Justice or Mercy, they are all Righteous and Holy, no Iniquity in them; His Ways are straight and equal, exact as if they were measured by an exact even Rule; but because we make application of a crooked Rule to them, we do imagine that they are crooked; as the blind Man judges no light to be, because he sees it not. How may the Lord contend and plead with us, as with that People, *Ezek. 18. 25.* Is it possible that any can challenge him, and clear themselves, *Who will be justified of all when he is judged, and before whom no flesh can be justified?* And yet, behold the Iniquity of Mens Hearts, there is a secret reflection of our Spirits upon his Majesty, as if his Ways were not equal; whenever we repine against them, and when we do not take with our Iniquity, and stop our Mouth with dust. Behold, the Lord will assert his own Ways, and plead with all flesh this Controversie, That all his proceedings are full of equity, He walks according to a Rule, tho' He be not tied to a Rule, He walks according to the Rules of Wisdom, Justice and Mercy, tho' his illimited Sovereignty

raignty might be a sufficient ground of clearing of all his proceedings. But we walk not according to a Rule, tho' we be bound to a Rule, and a Rule full of Equity.

Here is the equity and justness of His ways, the Gospel holds it forth in a Two fold consideration, *First*, If any Man turn from his Iniquity, and flie unto my Son as the City of Refuge, *he shall live, he hath Eternal Life*, Iniquity shall not be his ruin, altho' he hath done Iniquity; *O who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth Iniquity?* Is not this compleat Mercy? Whatever Iniquity hath been, aggravate it as ye can, tho' it could have ruined a World, yet it could not have ruined thee, that turns into Jesus Christ from Iniquity. What exception can all the World have against this, or his walking according to it. And on the other hand, whosoever continueth in Sin, tho' he appear to himself and others never so Righteous, if he entertain and love any known Sin, and will not part with it for Jesus Christ, *shall not he die in his Iniquity?* Is there any Iniquity in this, That he receive the wages of his works, his reward? That he eat of the fruit of his own ways? and drink of his own devices? But how many Hearts censure this way, as a rigid and strick severe dealing? the multitude think it cruelty to condemn any Christned Soul, to put so many in Hell; the Civil Man will think it's too hard measure, that he should be ranked in Hell with the Profane. But certainly, *all Mouths shall be stopped one day, and he shall be justified when he judges*: Ye that will not justify him in his sayings, and set to your Seal to the Truth of the Word, you shall be constrained to justify him, when he executes that Sentence, ye shall precipitate your own Sentence, and rather wonder at his clemency in suffering you so long.

This way of the Lord is equal and right in it self, but it is not so to every one, *the just Man shall walk in it, and not stumble*, as in an even way, nothing shall offend him, *Hosea 14.* last verse. Yet for

as equal and straight as it is, many other transgressors shall fall therein, they stumble even in the Noon-day, and High-way, where no offence is. It's true, often his own People stumble in it, as *David*, Psal. 73. and 94. *David's Foot was slipping*, yet a secret hold was by Mercy. It often requires a wise and prudent Man to understand it, because *his FootSteps are in the deep Waters*, Psal. 77. 19. *His way is in the depths of the Sea, his paths in great Waters*; so that Men must wait till the Lord expound his own ways, till he come out of the Waters, and make them a dry plain, and this is our advantage, the word says, *He is near thee, in thy Mouth, and neither above nor beneath in the depths, that thou needs neither descend nor ascend to know it*, Deut. 30. 11, 12, 13, 14. But his way is in the depths, and his footSteps are not known; so that we ought to hold us by the Word, till he expound his Work, his Word will teach us our Duty, and we may commit unto him his own way; the Word is a commentary to expound his ways. *David* lost the sight of God's footSteps, and was like to wander, till he came to the Sanctuary, and this shined as a Candle in a dark place, he learned there to know the unknown footSteps, and to follow them. By all means embrace the Word, and be satisfied with it, when ye do not comprehend his Work, it teaches as much in general, as may put us to quietness; all his Ways are judgement, Just and True in all his ways is the King of Saints. If I do not comprehend how it is, no wonder, for He makes Darknes His Covering, He spreads over his most curious Engines and Pieces of Workmanship a Vail of Darknes for a season, and *who can behold Him when He hides Himself?* says *Job*: And tho' he withdraw the Covering, yet what am I? *Who can by searching find out God?* If I shall examine his way, what Rule shall I take to try it by? If I measure by my shallow Capacity, or by my crooked way, shall I have any just account of it? Will my Arm measure the Heavens; his doth? If I examine it, or try it by himself,

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He is high as Heaven, and unsearchable. Therefore it becomes us to hearken to His Word, and believe its Sentence of his Work, when reason cannot comprehend it.

One thing (if it were deeply engraven on our Hearts) would be a Principle of settling our Spirits in all the Mysteries and Riddles of Providence, the Knowledge and Faith of His Sovereignty, of His Highness, and of his Wisdom; should he give account of his Matterstous? He is wise, and knows his Works, but is he bound to make us know them? *His Ways are above our Thoughts and Ways, as Heaven above the Earth, Isa. 55.* And therefore, O Grasshopper in the Earth, that dwells in Tabernacle of Clay, do not presume to model his ways according to thy conceptions. One thing is certain, this is enough for Faith, *All his Ways are Mercy and Truth, to these that keep his Covenant, and his Testimonies, Psal. 25. 10.* And there is no Way or Path of God so far above our reach, and unsearchable as His Mercy in pardoning Sin, and this is only the satisfying answer to all your objections and scruples. In these ye do but vent your own Thoughts, but says the Lord, *My Thoughts are above your Thoughts, as Heaven above Earth.* Ye but speak of your own ways, but my ways are far above yours, they are not measured by your Iniquity; and therefore, David subjoyns, *Psal. 25. verse 11. Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.*

S E R M O N III.

Deut. 32. 4, 5. *He is the Rock, His Work is perfect for all His Ways are Judgement: a God of Truth and without Iniquity, Just and Right is He. They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his Children, they are a perverse and crooked Generation.*

ALL His Ways are Judgement, both the way of his Commandments, and the ways of his Providence

Providence, both His Word which He hath given
 as a Lanthorn to Mens Paths, and His Works among
 Men. And this were the blessedness of Men, to be
 found both walking in His Ways, and waiting on
 Him in His Ways, having respect to all His Com-
 mandments, and respect to himself in all his Works:
 We all know in general, that he doth all well, and
 that all his Commandments are Holy and Just; nay,
 but our Practice and Affections belie our Know-
 ledge, and for the most part, we stand cross in our
 Humours and Affections, and Conversation both to
 his Word and Providence, and this is our Misery;
Great peace have they that love thy Law. What peace
 then can keep that Heart and Mind, that is daily at
 variance with his Statutes and Judgements? When
 the Heart would wish such a Command were not,
 when it is an Eye-sore to look upon it. *Blessed are*
the meek, it is good for a Man, both quietly to wait
and hope, and keep silence. How then must that Spi-
 rit be miserable, that stands cross unto God's Dis-
 pensations, and would limit the Holy One? Do
 not often our Hearts say, *I do well to be angry, why*
is it thus with me? But, *who hath hardened himself*
against him, and prospered? His Counsel must stand;
 and you may vex your self, and disquiet your Soul
 in the mean time by impatience, but you cannot by
 your Thought add one Cubit to your Stature, you
 may make your Case worse nor Providence hath
 made it, but you cannot make it better by so doing;
 so that at length, you must bow to Him, or be bro-
 ken; Oh then that this were engraven on our Hearts
 with the Point of a Diamond! *All His Ways are*
Judgement, that ye might be overcome with the
 equity of His Command and Dispensation, and
 your Heart and Tongue might not move against
 them. It was enough of old with the Saints, *It is*
the Lord, let Him do what seems good in His Eyes.
 God's Sovereignty alone pondered, may stop our
 Mouth, but if ye withall consider, it is perfect E-
 quity that rules all, it is Divine Wisdom that is the
 square of His Works, then how ought we to stoop
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cheerfully unto them? Onething yewould remember, His Ways and Paths are Judgement; and if ye judge aright of Him, ye must judge His Way, and not His single Footsteps; ye will not discern Equity and Judgement in one step or two, but consider His Way, joyn Adversity with Prosperity, Humbling with Exalting, take along the Thread of His Providence, and one part shall help you to understand another. There is reason in all, but the reason is not visible to us in so small parts of His Way and Work.

A God of Truth] Strange it is, that his Majesty is pleased to clothe himself with so many Titles and Names for us. He considers what our Necessity is, and accordingly expresses his own Name. I think nothing doth more hold forth the Unbelief of Men, and Atheism of our Hearts, nor the many several Titles God takes in Scripture; There is a necessity of a multitude of them to make us take up God, because we staying upon a general notion of God, rather frame in our Imaginations an Idol than the True God. As there is nothing doth more lively represent the unbelief of our Hearts, than the multitude of Promises: Men that consider such frequent repetitions of one thing in Scripture, so many diverse expressions of one God, may retire into their own Hearts, and find the cause of it, even the necessity of it: But while we look so slightly on these, we must judge it superfluous and vain. Needed there any more to be said, but, *I am your God, I am God*, if our Spirits were not so far degenerated unto Atheism and Unbelief? Certainly that word *Jehovah* holds forth more to Angels than all the inculcated Names and Titles of God to us; because we are dull and slow of Heart. Therefore wonder at these two when ye read the Scriptures; God's Condescendency to us, and our Atheism and Unbelief of him; they are both mysteries and exceeding broad. There is not a Name of God, but it gives us a Name, and that of reproach and dishonour; so that for every one, some evil may be written down; and it is to
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this purpose, *Moses* draws them out in length, that in the Glass of his glorious Name, the People might behold their own ugly Face. This Name is clear, *He is a God of Truth*, not only a True God, but Truth it self; to note his Excellency and Eminency in it. It is *Christ's Name*, *I am the Truth*, the substantial Truth, in whom all the Promises are Truth, are *Yea and Amen*. His Truth is his Faithfulness, in performing his Promises, and doing what his Mouth hath spoken: And this is established in the very Heavens, *Psal. 89. 2.* His Everlasting Purpose is in Heaven where he dwells; And if any Man can ascend up to Heaven, if any Creature can break through the Clouds, then may his Truth be shaken. His Word comes down among Men; Nay, but the Foundation of it is in Heaven, and there is his Purpose established; and therefore, there is nothing done in time can impare or hinder it. Ye think this World very sure, the Earth hangs unmoveable, tho' it hang upon nothing; All the tumults, confusions and reels hath been in the World, have never moved it to the one side. Heaven goeth about in one Tenure perpetually, keeping still the same distance. Nay, but his Truth is more established than so. Heaven and Earth depends upon a word of Command, He hath said, *Let it be so, and so it is.* Nay, but His Word is more established, of it saith Christ, *One jot or tittle of it cannot fail, tho' Heaven and Earth should fail.* He may change His Commands as He pleases, but He may not change His Promise, this puts an obligation on him, as he is Faithful and True to perform it; and when an Oath is superadded, O! how immutable are these two? When he promises in his Truth, and swears in his Holiness. Is there any power in Heaven and Earth can break that double Cord? *Matth. 5. 18. Heb. 6. 18.* There is no Name of God but it is comfortable to some, and as terrible to others. What comfort is it to a Godly Man that trusts in his Word, *He is a God of Truth?* An honest Man's word is much, his Oath

is more. What shall his Word be who is a God of Truth? Who, tho' all Men should be Liars, yet God is True. Ye who have ventured your Souls on his Word, ye have an unspeakable advantage, *His Truth endures for ever, and it is established in the Heavens*, the ground of it is without beginning, the end of it without end. Ye are more sure than the frame of Heaven and Earth, *for all these shall wax old as a Garment*. We speak of a naked word of Truth; Indeed it is no naked Word that is God's Word; His Works of Providence, and his Dispensations to you, is a naked and bare foundation, nay, a sandy foundation, and ye who lean so much to them, is it any wonder, ye so often shake and waver? All other grounds beside the Word, are uncertain, unstable, this only endures for ever: The Creatures goodness and perfection is but as the Grass and the Flower of the Field; Venture not much on your Dispositions and Frames, thou knows not what a Day may bring forth; but his Truth is to all Generations, and it is well tried, as Gold seven times; all Generations have tried it, and found it better than pure Gold. His Dispensations are arbitrary, no rule to you; He loveth to declare His Sovereignty here, and to expatiate in the Creatures sight, beyond its conceiving; but he hath limited himself in his Word, and come down to us, and laid bonds on himself. Will he then untie them for us? Give him liberty where he loves it; take him bound where he binds himself. How may God expostulat with this Generation, as these of little Faith? *How long shall I be with you?* saith Christ. How long will Christians tempt the Lord in seeking Signs? And will not rest upon his only Word and Promises? O Adulterous Generation! how long shall I be with you, and ye will not believe? Is it not Righteousness in him, either to give you no sign at all, or to give you a sign darker than the thing it self, as he did to the *Pharisees*? Ye will give credit to a Man's word, and will ye not believe Gods? An honest Man will get more trust of

us, than the True and Living God; Shall he not be offended with this? We declare it unto you, that He is Truth it self, and will not fail in His Promise; let that be your Castle and Refuge to enter into. Mercy and Truth are two sweet companions to go along with you in your Pilgrimage. David prayed for them, *Psal. 61. 7. O prepare Thy Mercy and Truth to preserve me:* Who will not ly safe within these Everlasting Arms? What power can break thorow? And this he promised to himself, *Psal. 57. 3. God shall send them out,* &c. Mercy made so many Precious Promises, and Truth keeps them. Mercy is the Fountain and Source of all our Consolation, and Truth and Faithfulness conveys it to us, and keeps it for us; It is these two that go before his Face, when he sits on a Throne of Majesty, and makes himself accessible to Sinners, *Psal. 89. 14.* and so they are the Path-way he walks in towards those who seek Him, *Psal. 25. 10.*

But this Sweet and Precious Name, that is as Ointment poured forth to these who love him; how doth it smell of Death to those who walk contrare to him? *He is a God of Truth,* to execute his Threatnings on those who despise his Commands, and tho' ye flatter your selves in your own Eyes, and cry, *Peace, peace, even tho' ye walk in the imagination of your heart;* yet certainly, *He is a God of Truth.* I pray you read that sad and weighty word, that will be like a Millstone about many Mens Necks, to sink them in Hell, *Deut. 29. 20, 21. Ye who add Drunkenness to Thirst;* whose Rule of walking is your own Lust, and whatsoever pleaseth you, without respect of his Commands, and yet flatter your selves with a Dream of peace, know this for a truth, *The Lord will not spare thee, he that made thee, will not have Mercy on thee, his iualousie will smoke against thee, and all the Curses written in this Book shall ly upon thee, and thy name shall be blotted out from under Heaven.* It was Unbelief of GOD's Threatning that first ruined Man, it is this still that keeps so many from the Remedy, and makes their

Misery irrecoverable. The Serpent brought them to this Question, *Hath God said, Ye shall Die?* And then presently the Question intertained becometh a Conclusion, *Ye shall not surely die.* Thus ye see how the Liar, from the beginning, was contrare to the God of Truth: And he murdered us by lying of that God of Truth: And it is the same that shuts out all hope of remedy. Ye do not as yet believe and consider, that curse that was pronounced against *Adam*, but is now also inflicted upon us; Therefore there is no solid belief can be of the Promises of the Gospel: And ye who think ye believe the Gospel, do but indeed fancy it, except ye have considered the true curse of God on all flesh: But if any Man have set to his Seal that God is true in his Threatning, and subscribed unto the Law; Then I beseech you, add not the unbelief of the Gospel unto your former disobedience. *He is a God of Truth*, in Promises and Threatnings. It is strange how untoward and froward we are, a perverse Generation, we do not believe his Threatnings, but fancy we receive his Promises, or else believing his Threatnings, we question his Promises. But know this for a Truth, his last Word is more weighty, and the unbelief of it is most dangerous. Ye have not kepted his Commands, and so the Curse is come upon you, do ye believe that? If ye do, then the Gospel speaks unto you. The God of Truth hath one word more, *He that believes, shall be saved*, notwithstanding of all his breaking of the Law; if ye do not set your Seal to this also, then ye say, He is not a God of Truth, ye say, He is a Liar. And as for you, who have committed your Souls to him, as to a faithful keeper, and acquiesced unto his Word of Promise for Salvation, think how unsuitable it is, for you to distrust him in other lesser things. Ye have the promise of this Life, whoever hath the Promises of the Life to come. Therefore do not make him a liar in these, *He is a God of Truth*, and will let you want no good thing. Say to the Righteous, *it shall be well with him*, whatever

ever be; Let Heaven and Earth mix thorow other, yet ye may be as Mount *Sion* unmoved in the midst of many Floods, because of the Promises.

Without Iniquity;] Who doubts of that, say ye? What needs this be added, who charges him with Iniquity, or Sin? Nay, but stay and consider, and you shall find great weight in this. It is true, none dare charge him openly, or speak in expresse terms against his Holiness, yet if we judge of our own and others Practices and Dispositions, as the Lord useth to construct of them; if we resolve our Murmurs, Impatience, Self-absolutions and Excuses to hold off Convictions, into plain Language; if we would translate them into a Scripture-style, certainly it will be found, that the most part of Men, if not all, use to impute Iniquity to God, and accuse him rather, than take with accusations laid against themselves. And therefore the Lord useth to go to Law with his People, He who is the Judge of the World, that cannot do unrighteously, *He who is the Potter, and we all the Clay*, yet he so far condescends to us for convincing us, as sometimes to refer the Controversie between him and his People, to other Creatures, as *Micah 6. 12.* He calls the Mountains and the Foundations of the Earth to judge between him and his People, and sometimes he appeals unto their own Consciences, and is content tho' Judge, to stand and be judged by these who were guilty, as *verse 3. and Jer. 2. verse 5. and 31.* All this supposes that when the Lord would endeavour to convince them of Iniquity, they did rather recriminate and took not with their own faults. This is a truth generally acknowledged by all. *He who is the Judge of the World, doth no Iniquity.* But O! that ye considered it, till the meditation of it were engraven on your Spirits, the Seal of God's Holiness, that ye might fear before him, and never call him to account for his matters. Who can say, I have purged my Heart from Iniquity? Among Men the holiest are defiled with it, and so are all their Actions. But here is one that ye may give him

an implicit Faith (so to speak) *He is a God of Truth*, and can speak no lie, *He does no Iniquity*, and cannot do wrong to any Man. Would there be so much impatience amongst you, and fretting against his Dispensations, if ye believed this solidly? Would ye repine against his Holy and Just Ways, were it not to charge God with Iniquity? Your murmuring and grudging at his Dispensations is with Child of Blasphemies, and he who can search the Reins sees it, and constructs so of it: You say by interpretation, that if ye had the government of your own Matters, or of Kingdoms, ye would order them better than he doth; how difficult a thing is it to perswade Men to take with their own Iniquity? O how many excuses and pretences, how many extenuations are used that this Conviction may not pierce deeply? But all this speaks so much blasphemy, that Iniquity is in God. Ye cannot take with your own Iniquities, but ye charge his Majesty with Iniquity.

Just and Right is he:] Is this any new thing? was it not said already, that he is *without Iniquity*, and *his Ways Judgement*? But alas! how ignorant are we of God, and slow of Heart to conceive Him as He is, therefore is there *Line upon Line*, and *Precept upon Precept*, and Name upon Name, if it be possible that at length we may apprehend God as he is: Alas! our Knowledge is but Ignorance, our Light Darknes, while it is shut up in the corner of our Mind, and shines not into the Heart, and hath no influence on our Practice. And the truth is, the belief of Divine Truths is almost no more but a not contradicting them, we do not seriously think of them as either to consent to them, or deny them. Is there any consideration amongst us now of God's Justice and Righteousness, tho' it be frequently spoken of? And what advantage shall ye have, if ye do not consider them? O how hard is it to perswade Mens Hearts of this, that God is Just, and will by no means acquit the guilty, there are so many delusions drunk in in Mens Hearts, contrary

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to His Truth; *Let no Man deceive you, be not deceived with vain words. Know ye not?* saith our Apostle. These are strange prefaces, would ye not think the point of truth subtile, that there needed so much prefacing unto, and yet what is it? even that which all Men grant, God's Wrath comes on the Children of Disobedience; but alas! few Men consider, but deceive themselves with Dreams of escaping it, tho' Men know it, yet they know it not, for they walk as if they knew no such thing.

Always however this is of little moment to affect our Spirits now, yet in the Day that God shall set your Iniquities before your Face, and set his Justice also before your Eyes, O how sad and serious a thing will it be then? If these two Verses were engraven on our Hearts, God's Justice and Holiness, our Corruption and Vileness, I think there would be other Thoughts among us than there are.

S E R M O N IV.

Dent. 32. 5. *They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his Children, &c.*

WE doubt this People would take well with such a description of themselves, as Moses gives: It might seem strange to us, that God should have chosen such a People out of all the Nations of the Earth, and they to be so rebellious and perverse, if our own experience did not teach us, how free his choice is, and how Long-suffering he is, and constant in his choice. His People are called to a conformity with Himself, *Be ye Holy, for I am Holy*, Lev. Chap. 19. and 20. and to a diffimity and separation from the rest of the World in their Conversation from whom God had separated them in Profession and Priviledges, Lev. 18. 24. But behold what unlikeness there is between God and his People.

ple. If ye were to paint out to the Life a Heathen People, you needed no other image or pattern to copy at but this same description of this People. It is this that makes *Moses* in the Preface turn to the Heavens and Earth, and call them to hear his Song: And *Isaiah* beginneth his Preaching thus, *Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth, &c.* A strange thing it must be, that senseless Creatures are called to wonder at. It must surpass all the wonders and prodigies of Nature and Art: And what is that? *I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me, &c.* If we consider what this People seemed once to be, and thought themselves to be, we may easily know how they corrupted themselves. If ye look on them at one time, *Exod. 19. 8.* and *Deut. 5. 27.* Ye would call them *Children*. There was never a fairer undertaking of obedience than this, *All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do.* So that the Lord commends them for speaking well, verse 28. *They have well said all that they have spoken.* Verse 29: *O that there were such an heart in them!* But compare all this Peoples Practice with this Profession, and you shall find it exceeding contrary; they indeed corrupted themselves, tho' they got warning to take heed of it: *Take ye therefore good heed unto your selves, lest ye corrupt your selves, Deut. 4. 15, 16.* But alas! it was within them that destroyed them; there was not such a Heart in them, as to hear and obey; but they undertake, being ignorant of their own deceitful Hearts, which were desperately wicked. And therefore behold what corruption ensued and followed upon such a professed resolution. They never sooner promised Obedience, but they disobeyed, they did abominable works, and did no good, and this is to corrupt their way, *Psal. 14. 1, &c.* We need not instance this longer in this People, we ourselves are a sufficient proof of it. We may make this Song our own, we have corrupted our selves. Once we had a fair shew of Zeal for God, of love and desire of Reformation of Life, many solemn undertakings

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were that we should amend our ways and doings. But what is the fruit of all? Alas! we have corrupted our selves more nor they. *Israel* promised, but we vowed and swore to the Most High, Reformation and Amendment of Life in our Conversations and Callings. Lay this Rule to our Practices, and are we not a perverse and crooked Generation? Oh that we were more affected with our Corruptions, and were more sensible of them, then we could not choose but mourn for our own, and the Lands departing from God. Did not every Man vow and swear to the Most High God, to endeavour Reformation of his Life, even a Personal-reformation? But alas! where is it? *He that is filthy, is filthy still*, nay, which is worse, the evil Man waxeth worse and worse; There is a great noise of a Publick Reformation of Ordinances and Worship, but alas! the Deformation of Life and Practice outcries all that noise. Nay, certainly, all that is done in the Publick, must come to no account before God, since our Practices outcry it. Publick reformation is abomination where Personal-corruptions do not cease: This made the *Jews* solemn days hateful, *Their hands were full of Blood*, Isa. i. All that ye have spent on the publick, will never be reckoned, since ye will not consecrate your Lives to God, will not give your Lusts up to him. Ye are His Enemies in the mean time, tho' you account your selves Religious Friends. I beseech you consider your ways; would any of us have thought to have seen such profanity, mocking of Godliness and Ignorance in *Scotland* in so short a time? Nay, it is to be feared, that the Day is not far off, when ye will corrupt your selves, and do abominable things, yea, defile your selves as ill as the Nations that know not God.

Every Man useth to impute his Faults to something beside himself; e're Men take with their own Iniquity, they will charge God that gave no more Grace: But if Men knew themselves, they would deduce their Corruption and Destruction both, from one

one Fountain, that is, from themselves. Ignorance of our selves maketh us oft undertake fair, and promise so well on our own head. What was the Fountain of this Peoples Corruption, and Apostatizing from their Professions? The Lord hints at it, Deut. 5. 25, &c. *Oh that they had such a Heart.* Alas, poor People, ye know not your selves, that speak so well, I know thee better than thou dost thy self; I will declare unto thee thy own Thought, thou hast not such a Heart as to do what thou sayest, there is a desperate wicked Heart within thee, that will destroy thee by lying unto thee. If thou knewest this Fountain of Original Corruption, thou wouldst despair of doing, and say, I cannot serve the Lord. Now here is the Fountain of the Lands Corruption this Day: why is our way corrupted? Because our Hearts within were not cleansed, and because they were not known. If we had dried up the Fountain, the Streams had ceased: but we did only damn it up, and cut off some Streams for a season: we set up our Resolutions and Purposes as an hedge to hold it in; but the Sea of the Hearts Iniquity, that is above all things, hath overflowed it, and defiled our way more than in former times. Ye thought upon no other thing, but that presently ye would be all changed People, and would reform without more ado. And thus it is with you in all your publick Repentances. But alas! you know not your selves; it is still within you, which will yet corrupt you; and it was within us that hath undone us. We were too confident of our selves, and it is no wonder that the Lord suffer us to prove our selves, that we may know what is in our Heart. Now therefore since ye have so often tryed it, I beseech you, follow not such a way again. Ye are called to *deny your selves, and to follow Christ*; and this is a great part of it, that ye may never expect for any good within your selves, or the helping of any evil. *In me is thy help found.* Look to the Fountain of Life, Jesus Christ, and despair of your own Hearts, for they are desperately wicked, so wicked,

wicked, that if ye knew them, ye would despair of them, and give them over to another hand, who can creat a new Heart within you. Ye use to impute your Back-slidings to the Times, to Temptations, to Company, and such like. This is the way that Men shift the Challenges of Sin: The Drunkard puts it on his Companion, the Servant on his Master that led him wrong; ye People put Rulers in the fault, and absolve themselves, and Rulers put one another in the wrong, and absolve themselves. But alas! all of us are ignorant of our selves: It is not Times nor Temptations that corrupt us, but our selves. *No Man is tempted (saith James) of God, but every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed, James i. 14.* Temptation were no temptation, if our Hearts were not wicked Hearts. Nay, many of us are ready to tempt temptations, to provoke the Devil to temptations: we cast our selves open to temptations. Temptation finds Lust within, and Lust within is the Mother to conceive Sin, if Temptation be the Father. Times do not bring evils along with them, they do but discover what was hid before: all the Evils and Corruptions you see now among us, where were they in the Day of our First-love, when we were as a loving and beloved Child? Have all these risen up of late? No certainly, all that you have seen and found were before, tho' they did not appear: before they were in the root, now you see the fruit. All the Apostacy, and Profanity that hath been vented in these Days, it was all shut up within the corners of Mens Hearts at the beginning: Time and Temptation hath but uncovered the Heart, and made the inside out; hath but opened a Sluce to let out this Sea of Corruption. It's not bred since, but seen since.

Now so it is with us, we have corrupted our selves, and so we corrupt our selves still more. Back-sliding cometh on as Gray-hairs, here and there, and is not perceived by Beholders. *Nemo repente fit turpissimus.* No Man becometh worst at first; There are

are many steps between that and good. Corruption comes on Mens way as in fruits, some one part beginneth to alter, and then it groweth worse, and putrifieth, and corrupteth the rest of the parts. An Apple rotes not all at once, so it is with us; Men begin at leisure, but they run post or all be done. In some one step of our way we take liberty, and think to keep the rest clean: But when that part is corrupted, *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*, and all followeth; And then he that corrupteth himself, is ready to corrupt others. *Children that are corrupters*, Iia. 1. 4. Every one by his example, corrupts another; and by corrupting others, they again corrupt themselves more. O! how infectious an evil is Sin, of a pestilentious nature: And truly our Hearts are more ready to receive such impressions, than either a World, or a Devil is to make them.

Their spot is not] Why doth the Lord take pleasure to reckon their Sins, to describe so abominable a People? Is not this *Jacob*, in whom he saw no Iniquity? Is not this *Israel*, whose Transgressions are not known? Certainly if this People would have charged themselves so, he would not have done it. He loves to forget, when we remember our Sins; But he must remember them, when we forget them. What is the Lord's great controversie with Men? here it is, how can you say, or think that ye are not polluted? Or if ye take with such a General; Yet, why is not the conviction of your Sin and Misery so deeply engraven, as to pursue you out of all hope of remedy in your selves? Jer. 2. 22, 23. *And therefore is thine Iniquity marked before me, saith the Lord.* God hath determined not to wrong his Justice. If Men should go away unpunished and unjudged both, where were his Righteousness? If there were no record of Mens Transgressions, were He a Righteous Judge? Therefore, those who do not judge themselves, must leave judgement to him; For once the Mouth of all flesh must be stopped, and all become guilty before God. Why pleads the Lord with

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with Man? Because Man says, *I am innocent, I have not sinned, his anger will turn away*, Jer. 2. 35. Will any speak so in terms? No indeed, but the Lord constructs so of the most part; because they do more consider the wrongs done to them, nor their own wrongs done to God. All Men confess the general, that they are Sinners; but who searches and tries his way to find out particulars; and in as far as ye do not charge your selves with particular guiltiness, untill ye be afraid of his anger, as long as the consideration of your Sins is so superficial and shallow, that ye apprehend no danger of wrath, or immunity from it, certainly God will plead with you. Justice must so far be glorified, as once to conclude you under the Sentence of Death: If ye do it not now, then ye leave God to be your Judge and Party. But if any Man shall take with his guiltiness, till his Mouth be stopped, and condemn himself in God's sight: I say Mercy and Grace in God must not be wronged, *He that judges himself, shall not be judged of the Lord*. What a fair offer is this to you all? The Lord offers to you, if ye will in time be your own judges, I will resign my Judgement to you; If ye will but in earnest pass the Sentence, I will neither pass it, nor execute it. If ye come to the Mediator Christ Jesus, to escape from the wrath of a Judge, you shall meet with a reconciled Father, and with such love in him, as shall hide a multitude of offences. O! the depth and height, and breadth of that Love! Well then, it shall be a Sea to cast your offences into, that shall drown them. Had not his People many spots? Is there any Man can say, *I have cleansed my Heart from Iniquity*? No, not one. Yet behold, he sees no spots in his People: He doth not make them his People because spotless, but he seeth them spotless, because he makes them his People. There is no covering that can hide Mens uncleanness from his piercing Eye, but one, even Jesus Christ His Righteousness; And *blest is he whose Sins are covered*: If this covering were spread over the mouth of all Hell, then

then Hell should have a covering from his Eyes. If ye therefore strip your selves naked of your own pretences and leaves, and think not your self secure under any created shelter; if ye hide not your Iniquity, then it shall be hid indeed; Here is a covering that shall hide it from his Eyes. There is no spot so hainous, none so ingrained, but the Blood of Jesus can wash it as perfectly out, as if it had never been, *Isa. 16. 17.* Tho' your spots were such as are not incident to his Children, yet this Blood cleanses from one and all, it is of an infinite nature. But tho' it be so, that *the Blood of Christ cleanseth from all Sin, that there is a Fountain opened in the House of David for Sin and for Uncleanness*, for Sin and Separation, for such hainous offences as may separate People, even from the Congregation of the Lord's People. Yet there are some Sins, some Spots that ordinarily his People are not defiled with, and in this respect they may be called *Holy and Undeiled in the way*. There are some Marks and Characters of Unregenerated Men, so legible and expresse, that we may even read from Mens Conversation, that they are not the Children of God. Tho' the Blood of Christ wash from all, yet the Child of God ordinarily is kept from some kind of Spots, so that if a Man shall be spotted with them, it's no marvel he question if he be a Child or not. There are two, which I think so gross and unclean spots, that I cannot conceive how a Soul washen by Jesus Christ, can be defiled with them; one is, a course of Profanity; the common walk of the multitude is so gross and profane, so void of God and Godliness, that it witnesseith to their Face, that they are not the Sons of God: *He that is born of God, Sinneth not*; he maketh not Sin his way and trade to walk into, and please himself into. What are the most part of you, I pray you? Is your spot like the spot of his Children? Do not ye declare your Sin as *Sodom*, ye Drunkards, who wallow in it daily, and tho' ye profess Repentance, yet never amend? Ye who have a custom of swear-

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ing and blaspheming his Holy Name, do not ye carry in your Forehead a Spot that is not like his Children? The Child of God may fall in many particulars, but it is not the spot of a Child to continue in them, to add Drunkenness to Thirst, and yet to dream of escaping Wrath. I pray you consider it; for it is of great moment. Do ye carry such a black Mark, the Devil's Mark? O! do not think your selves safe. May not this perswade you? Do but compare your selves in your converse and walk with an Heathen without the Church, set aside your Publick Profession of coming to the Church, and hearing the Word and Church Priviledges; And is there difference visible between you and them? Many of you Pray no more in Secret, or in your Families nor they; ye curse and swear as they, ye are covetous and worldly as they; And if ye can, do but draw a line of difference? And if ye cannot, then I ask what are ye? Is not this the spot of Bastards? Another Spot is, Hatred of Godliness and the Godly, this is indeed the most lively image of the Devil; *who hates his Brother, is of the Devil.* He that hates the Son, can he love the Father? He that hates him that is begotten, hates also him that begat him: And he that loves him that begat, loves him that is begotten. Now how can he be begotten of God, who hates that nature he is said to partake of, who hates him that is begotten? I wonder that many of your Consciences are not touched with this? How can ye imagine ye are Children of God, when there is none of your Neighbours that your Heart riseth more against, that ye can least abide, nor those who seek God most diligently, whose Conversation is different from the Worlds? Do not flatter your selves, as if it were Hypocrisie ye hated? No, no, ye can agree with Profanity, and how can ye hate Hypocrisie? Ye can agree with a profane Hypocrite, with a profane Man, that feigns and dissembles Repentance, but if once he were so thoroughly changed, as to hate his former way, and forsake it, then your antipathy beginneth.

neth. What a ridiculous thing is it, for profanity to take upon it to censure Hypocrisie? Certainly if Profanity cast out with Hypocrisie, it must be because it hath a form of Godliness, which it so much detesteth. It is a strange hatred at Godliness that a profane Man hath, that he cannot abide the very shadow of it. I beseech you, who love not Holiness in your own Persons, who hate to be reformed your selves, do not add his height of Sin to it, as to hate it in others also. If ye be not Godly your selves, do not add this declared manifest character of a Child of the Devil to it, to hate Godliness in others. There were some hope of you, if ye held it in reverence and estimation where ye saw it. There are many other spots not incident to his Children, as this, that Men will not take with their Sin, and the Curse; it is a great difficulty to convince the most part of Men how miserable they are, how void of God: all the World will not put them out of a good opinion of themselves: And I think this hath been the Spot of this People; they would not take with their Guiltiness, a Stubborn-hearted People, Whole-hearted. There needs no more to declare a number of you not to be God's Children, but this, ye have lived all your time in the opinion and belief that ye were God's Children, that ye believed in him; yet never saw your selves lost and miserable. This was the spot of this People, that they esteemed themselves Children, tho' they had many spots that testified to their Face that they were no Children; they waxed worse and worse, neither Mercies nor Judgements amended them: *When He slew them*, it may be, *they sought him, and flattered him with their Mouth, but their Hearts were not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his Covenant*, Psal. 78. 34. Ye would have thought them a godly People while under the Rod for a season, but all that was but extorted and pressed out by violence of Affliction, as the groans of a Beast under a burden; but a little time declared that it was but flattery, tho' they thought themselves

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themselves ingenuous, and therefore they returned to
 their old provocations, as a Sow to the Puddle, or
 Dog to his Vomit. And is not this our Spot,
 even the Spot of great and small? If any would
 look upon us in our Engagements and Vows under
 Trouble, we appear like His People, a Praying, Re-
 penting, and Believing People. But how quickly
 doth all this prove Flattery? Do we not still re-
 turn to our old ways, that we have been examplar-
 y punished for, and which we so solemnly engag-
 ed against? The heat of the Furnace dieth out, and
 they wax colder and harder, a little time wears a-
 way all their tendernefs: every Man to his own
 things, and no Man seeks the things of *Jesus Christ*.
 This was this Peoples Sin and Spot. *Jeshurun waxed
 fat and kicked, and lightly esteemed the Rock of
 their Salvation*. When their Heads were lifted up
 to Government, when they were raised out of the
 Waters of Affliction and Poverty; Then they for-
 gat God, they oppressed the poor and needy, eat up
 his People as Bread, and could not abide to have
 their Faults told them, they said to the Seers, See
 not, and to the Prophets, Propheste not unto us right
 things, &c. Isa. 30. 10. I think likewise, that
 Oppression is not the spot of his Children, whoever
 use it. And Covetousness presses Men to it, when
 power is in their hand to compass it: This is a
 vile spot, unworthy of any Ruler, let be a Christi-
 an: It was abhorred among Pagans. O! but it cries
 to Heaven, (saith the Scripture) it hath a double
 cry when other Sins cry once. The hainousness of
 it crieth once, and the poor People cry again, and
 both these come up to the Ears of the Lord of Hosts:
 Nay, it hath the cry of Murther, and another be-
 side. He that is greedy of Gain, is said to take a-
 way the Life of the Owners thereof, Prov. 1. 19. So
 he is a Murtherer before God, and the poor Man's
 Blood crieth for Vengeance, and then himself se-
 conds it either by Prayer, or crying out for misery,
*Job 35. 9. All Mens Prayers and Professions will
 not outcry these two. The Peoples many Prayers
 could*

could not be heard, *Isa. 1. 15. because their Hands were full of Blood,* which had a louder cry than their Prayers. The poor also oppressing the poor, is like a sweeping Rain that leaves nothing behind it.

It is read in the Margin, that they are not his Children, this is their blot. And indeed it is so; It is a great blot and stain in the Face of any Man whoever he be, that he is not born of God, that he can reckon kindred to none but *Adam*: But what indignity is it and disgrace for a People professing His Name, yet to have no other Generation, to reckon no higher than the Earth, and the Earthly. What is now the great blot of our Visible Church? Here it is, the most part are not God's Children, but called so; And it is the greater blot that they are called so, and are not. O poor Saints, esteem your honour and high priviledge, ye have received this *to be the Sons of God*, It is no blot to you, that ye are poor and despised in the World: But it is, and shall be an eternal blot, to the great and rich and wise in the World, that they are not the Children of God. Christianity is no blot, tho' it be in reproach among Men, but it is really the glory and excellency of a Man: but the want of it, alas! how doth it abase many high and noble, impoverish many rich, and insatiate many wise? Ye think all of you are the Children of God, because ye are in the Church, and partake of the Ordinances and Sacraments; and so did this People. But *Moses* did not flatter these *Jews*, but told both Princes and People in their Face, that they were not Children of God, because only *Israel* in the letter, they had not Childrens manners. Oh! that it might not be said of the most part of you, *That ye are not Children of God*, and that that is your blot and shame. It is the shame of Rulers, not to be the Children of God. They are Wise, they are Active, they are Noble, but one Spot disgraceth all, one fly maketh their Ointment stink, they are not gracious, many of them but Sons of Men at the farthest reckoning,

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reckoning, are not begotten again to a lively Hope. *Not many Wise, not many Noble, not many Rich.* The scantness of Gracious Men, is the Spot of Judicatories, that there are many Children of the World, but few Children of Light in them. O! how beautiful and glorious would Judicatories be, if all the Members were Children of Light? What glory would there be, if all of them did shine and enlighten one another? But what beauty or comeliness, what Majesty can be in Rulers, or Judicatories, when the Image of God is not in them? This is also the Spot of Assemblies, Synods, Presbyteries, that there are few Godly Ministers. Alas! that this complaint should be, even among those, whose Office it is to beget many Children to God, how few of them are begotten, or hath the Image of their Father? And thus Church-assemblies have no beauty, such as the Courts of Jesus Christ should have. O! that we were in love with Christianity and Grace, that it were our grand question, how shall I be put among the Children? The Lord seems to wonder at it, and makes a Question of it, *How can such as we be put among the Children?* Jer 3. 19. But he answers it himself, *Thou shalt call me, my Father, and shalt not turn away from me.* There is no more, but take with your wandrings, and wrongs done to God; Imbrace him in Jesus Christ, and he becomes your Father; and if ye be Children, sure ye will resolve to abide in your Father's House, and turn no more to a present World, or your former Lusts.

They are a perverse and crooked Generation] What pleasure hath the Lord in speaking thus, when He upbraids none? Certainly, in a manner, it is drawn out of him. Would he object our Faults, if we did not defend them by obstinacy. Perverseness and crookedness is obstinacy and incorrigibleness against Mercies and Judgements. *That which is crooked, cannot be made straight,* saith Solomon. Then doth the Lord take notice of Sins, when Men refuse to return, and to maintain their Sins. It is this which

which heightens provocations, and makes out the controversy, - perverseness in Sin. It is not ordinary common infirmities that the Lord punisheth, either in a Land, or Person; but when Infirmities are discovered by the Light of the Word, when the Lord useth Means to reclaim Men in his Providence, and yet no Means prevail; then are they reckoned perverse. Now perverseness is not the spot of His Children: The Child of God daily bows, and folds to him, receives Challenges from him, takes with Iniquity, and yields unto God. O! that this Title might not be written above the head of this Generation deservedly. This is a perverse and crooked Generation.

S E R M O N V.

Psal. 73. 28. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy Works.

AFTER Man's first Transgression he was shut out from the Tree of Life, and cast out of the Garden, by which was signified, his seclusion and sequestration from the Presence of God, and Communion with Him: And this was, in a manner, the extermination of all Mankind in one, when *Adam* was driven out of Paradise. Now this had been an eternal separation for any thing that we could do (for we can do nothing, but depart by a perpetual backsliding, and make the distance every Day wider) except it had pleased the Lord of His Infinite Grace, to condescend to draw near to us in gracious Promises, and offers of a Redeemer. If he had not made the first Journey from Heaven to Earth, by sending His only Son, we should have given over the hope of returning from Earth to Heaven. But he hath taken away the greatest part of

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that distance, in drawing near to our Nature; yea, in assuming our *Flesh* into the Fellowship of His Glorious Divinity. He hath stooped so low to meet with us, and offered himself the Trifling-place between God and us, a fit Meeting-place, where there is an conjunction of the interests of both Parties. And now there is no more to do, but to draw near to God in Jesus Christ, since He hath made the great Journey to come down to us. We have not that infinite gulf of satisfaction to Justice to pass over, we have not the height of Divine Majesty, as He is infinitely above us, and offended with us, to climb up unto. Certainly we could not but fall into the Lake that is below us, if we were to aim so high. But the Lord hath been pleased to descend to us, in our mean Capacity in the *Flesh*, and fill up that immensurable gulf of Justice, by the Infinite Merits and Sufferings of His Son in our *Flesh*. And now He invites us, He requests us to come to Him in His Son, and have Life. We are not come to Mount *Sinai*, that might not be touched, that burnt with Fire and Tempest, where there were terrible fights and intollerable noise. I say, such a God we might have had to do with, a consuming Fire, in stead of instructing Light; A devouring Fire, in stead of a healing Sun of Righteousness, considering that there is nothing in us, which is not fit and prepared fuel for everlasting burnings. But we are come (and that is the eternal wonder of Angels) unto Mount *Sion*, to be Citizens in the City of God, and Fellow-citizens with blessed Angels and glorious Spirits, to Peace and Reconciliation with Him who was our Judge. And if you ask how this may be? I answer, because we have one Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant to come to, whose Blood cryeth louder for Pardon of Sinners, than all Mens Transgressions can cry for Punishment of Sinners, *Heb. 12. 18, 19, 20, &c.*

Let us then consider the first step and degree of Union with God, it consists in Faith in Jesus Christ. This is the first motion of the Soul in drawing

drawing near to God; For, *as there is no Remission without Blood*; So no Access to God without a Mediator. For if you consider what is in Jesus Christ, you will find that which will engage the Desire of the Heart; as also, that which will give boldness and confidence to act that desire. Eternal Life is promised and proposed in Him, He offers rest to weary Souls, and hath it to give. That which we ignorantly and vainly seek else where, here it is to be found. For Personal-excellencies, He is the chief, infinitely beyond comparison; And for Suitableness to us and our Necessities, all the Gospel is an expression of it: So that He is presented in the most attractive drawing manner that can be imagined. And then when the Desires are inflamed, yet if there be no Oyl of Hope to feed it, it will soon cool again. Therefore take a view again, and you may have boldness to enter into the Holiest, by the Blood of Jesus. There was some kind of distance kept in the Old Testament, none but the High Priest might enter into the Holiest Place; But the entry of our High Priest into it, that is into Heaven, hath made it patent to all that come to Him and apply His Blood. There is a new and living way by the Holy Flesh of Christ, consecrated and made of infinite value and use, by the Divinity of His Person: And therefore, having such a one of our kindred so great with God, *we may draw near with a true Heart, and full assurance of Faith, having our Consciences sprinkled, &c.* Heb. 10. 18, 19, 20, &c. Now, since the way is made plain to you, and the entry is opened up in the Gospel; Do you not find your Hearts stir within you to draw near to Him? Do you not find a necessity of making Peace by such a Mediator? O! that you knew the great distance between God and your Natures, and what the hazard is: *Lo, they that are far from thee, shall perish*: Then certainly, you would take hold of this Invitation, and be easily drawn unto Jesus Christ. But unto you who have adventured to draw near for Pardon of Sin in Christ; I would recommend

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recommmend unto you, that you would draw ye nearer to God. After that the Partition-wall of Wrath and Condemnation is removed; yet there is much Darknes in your Minds, and Corruption in our Natures that separates from Him. I mean intercepts and disturbs that blessed Communion you are called unto. Therefore I would exhort you, as *James*, *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you*, Chap. 4. 8. And that, wherein this most consists, is in studying that purification of our Natures, that cleansing of our Hearts from Guile, and our Hands from Offences, by which our Souls may draw towards a resemblance of God. This access and drawing near to God in assimilation, and conformity of Nature, is the great design of the Gospel. *Be ye Holy, for I am Holy*. Now ye are agreed, *walk with him*, Amos 3. 3. *As Enoch walked with God*, Gen. 5. 24. That is, labour in all your Conversation, to set Him before your Eyes, and to study to be well pleased with Him in all things, and to please Him in all, to conform your selves to His pleasure in every thing. And this Communion in walking, especially consists, in that Communication of the Spirit with God in Prayer: This is the nearest and sweetest approach, when the Soul is lifted up to God, and is almost out of it-self in Him: And this being the ordinary Exercise and Motion of the Soul, it exceedingly advances in the first point of nearness, that is, in conformity with God. Drawing often near in Communion with Him in Prayer, makes the Soul draw towards His Likeness, even as much Converse of Men together, will make them like one another.

Now for the commendation of this, *It is good*; What greater evil can be imagined than separation from the greatest Good? And what greater good, than accession to the greatest Good? Every thing is in so far happy and well, as it is joynd with and enjoyeth that which is convenient for it. Light is the perfection of the Earth, remove it, and what a disconsolat and unpleasant thing is it? Now truly

truly there is nothing suitable to the Immortal Spirit of Man, but God; And therefore, all its Happiness or Misery must be measured by the access or recess, nearness or distance of that infinite Goodness. Therefore, is it any wonder, *that all they that go a whoring from him, perish*, as every Man's Heart doth? For we are infinitely bound by Creation, by many other bonds stronger than Wedlock, to consecrate and devote our selves wholly to God, but this is treacherously broken: Every Man turns aside to Vanity and Lies, and is guilty of Heart-whoredom from God, and Spiritual Idolatry, because the Affection that should be preserved chaste for Him, is prostitute to every base Object: So then, this divorcement of the Soul from God, cannot but follow thereupon, even an eternal eclipse of true and real Life and Comfort. And whoever draw back from the Fountain of Life and Salvation, cannot but find else where Perdition and Destruction, *Heb. 10. ult.* My Beloved, let us set this aside, all other things which are the pursutes and endeavours of the most part of Men. Mens natural desires are carried towards Health, Food, Raiment, Life and Liberty, Peace, and such like. But the more rational sort of Men, seek after some shadow of Wisdom and Vertue. Yet the generality of Men, both high and low, have extravagant, illimited desires toward Riches, Pleasure, Preferment; And all that we have spoken, is inclosed within the narrow compass of Mens abode here, which is but for a Moment; so that if it were possible, that all these forementioned desires and delights of Men, could attend any Man for the space of an Hundred Years, tho' he had the concurrence of the Streams of the Creatures to bring him in satisfaction, tho' all the World should bow to him and be subject to the beck of his Authority, without stroke of Sword, tho' all the Creatures should spend their Strength and Wit upon his Satisfaction; yet do but consider what that shall be within some few Years, when he shall be spoiled of all that attendance, denuded of all external

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external comforts, when the fatal period must close his Life, Peace, Health, and all; and his poor Soul also, that was drowned in that gulf of pleasure, shall then find it self robbed of its precious Treasure, that is, God's Favour, and so remain in everlasting banishment from His Presence. Doyethink, I say, that Man were happy? Nay, O happy *Lazarus*! who is now blessed in *Abraham's* Bosom, who enjoys an Eternity of Happiness, for a Moments Misery. But my Beloved, you know that it is not possible, even to attain to that imagined Happiness here. All the gain that is found, is not able to quit the cost and expence of Grief, Vexation, Care, Toiling and Sweating that is about them.

But if you would be perswaded, there is that to be found easily, which you trouble your selves seeking else where: And believe me, tho' the general apprehension of Men be, that Peace, Plenty, Preferment and Satisfaction in this Life, to compence their pains, is more easily attainable than Fellowship and Communion with God; Yet I am perswaded, that there is nothing more practicable than the Life of Religion. God hath condemned the World under Vanity and a Curse, and that which is crooked, can by no Art or Strength be made straight; But he hath made this attainable, by his gracious Promises, even a blessed Life, in approaching near to Himself the Fountain of all Life. And this is a certain Good, an universal Good, and an eternal Good. It will not disappoint you as other things do, of which, you have no assurance for all your Toilings. This is made more infallible to a Soul that truly seeks it in God. It is as certain, that they cannot be ashamed through Frustration, as that he is Faithful. And then it is an universal Good, one comprehensive of all, one eminently and virtually, all things created, to be joyned to the Infinite All-fulness of God: This advanceth the Soul to a participation of all that is in Him. This is Health, *Psal.* 42. last. *Prov.* 3. 8. This is Light,

John 8. 12. It is Life, *John* 11. 25. Liberty, *John* 8. 36. Food and Raiment, *Isa.* 61. 10. And *John* 4. 14. And what not? It is Profit, Pleasure, Preferment in the superlative degree, and not scattered in so many various Streams, which divide and distract the Heart, but all combined in one. It is the True Good of both Soul and Body, and so the only Good of Man. And *Lastly*, It is Eternal, to be coetaneous with thy Soul: Of all other things it may be said, *I have seen an end of them*, they were, and are not: but this will survive Time, and all the changes of it, and then it will begin to be perfect, when all perfection is at an end. Now from all this, I would exhort you in Jesus Christ, to ponder those things in your Hearts, and consider them in reference to your own Souls, that ye may say with *David*, *It is good for me to draw near to God.*

That which all Men seek after, is Happiness, and Well-being. Men pursue nothing but under the notion of Good; And to compleat that which may be called Good, there is required some excellency in the thing it self, and then a conveniency and suitableness to us; And these jointly draw the Heart of Man. But the great Misery is, that there is so much Ignorance and Misapprehension of that which is truly Good; And then when any thing of it is known, there is so little serious Consideration and Application of it to our selves; And this makes the most part of Men wander up and down in the pursuit of divers things, which are not that true Good of the Soul, and set their Hearts on that which is not, untill they find their Hearts fall down, as wanting a Foundation, and then they turn about again to some other Vanity. And so the wandrings and strayings of Men are infinite, because the By-ways are innumerable, tho' the True way be but one. Yea, the turnings and toilings of one Man are various and manifold, because, he quickly loses the scent of Happiness in every way he falls into, and therefore must turn to another. And

And thus Men are never at any solid settling about this Great Business; never resolute wherein this Happiness consists, nor peremptory to follow it; But they fluctuate upon uncertain Apprehensions, and divers Affections, until the time and date of Salvation expire, and then they must know certainly and surely, the inevitable danger and irrecoverable loss they have brought themselves to, who would not take notice of the sure way, of escaping both Wrath, and attaining Happiness while it was to be found.

Well then, this is the Great Business we have here to do; yes, to make the Circle the larger, it is that Great Business we have to do in this World, to know wherein the True Well-being and Eternal welfare of our Souls consists, and by any means to apply unto that, as the only thing necessary, in regard of which, all other things are Ceremonies, Circumstances and Indifferent Things. And to guide us in this Examination and Application, here is one Man who having almost made Shipwreck upon the Rocks which Men commonly dash upon, and being by the Lord led safely by, and almost arrived at the Coast of True Felicity, he sets out a Beacon, and lights a Candle to all who shall follow him, to direct them which way they shall steer their course. Examples teach more effectually than Rules: It is easie for every Man to speak well upon this Point in general, and readily all will acknowledge, that here it is, and no where else: But yet all this is outcried by the contrary noise of every Man's Practice. These general grants of Truth, are recalled in the Conversations of Men; Therefore they cannot have much influence upon any Man: But when we hear one speak, and see him walk so too; when we have the example of a most wise Man, who wanted not these worldly expectations, which other Men have; So that he not only propones it to us, but after much serious advisement, after mature consideration of all that can be said, of the Wicked's best Estate, and

the Godlies worst, setting down resolute conclusions for himself. *It is good for me to draw near to God*; Yea, ~~he~~ determinate into it, that if none of the World should be of that mind, he would not change it; Tho' all should walk in other ways, he would choose to be rather alone in this, than in the greatest croud of Company in any other. Now, I say, when we have such a Copy cast us, a Man of excellent Parts in Sobriety and Sadness, choosing that way, which all in words confess to be the best, should not this awake us out of our Dreams, and raise us up to some more Attention and Consideration of what we are doing? The Words you see, are the Holy Resolution of a Holy Heart, concerning that which is the Chiefest Good. You see the way to Happiness, and you find the particular application of that to *David's* Soul, or of his Soul to it. We shall speak a Word of the Thing it self, then of the Commendation of it, then of the Application of it.

For the Thing it self, *Drawing near to God*, it gives us some ground to take a view of the Posture in which Men are found by Nature, *far off from God*. Our Condition by Nature, I cannot so fitly express, as in the Apostle's words, Eph. 2. 12. *Without Christ, Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World*. A deplorable Estate indeed, hopeless and helpless: No Hope in it, that is the extremity of Misery, the refuse of all Conditions. *Without Christ, and without God*. O! these are words of infinite weight: Without those, without whom it is simply impossible to be Happy: and without whom it is not possible but to be Miserable, without the Fountain of Light, Life and Consolation, without which, there is nothing but pure Darknells, without any Beam of Light; Nothing but Death, without the least breathing of Life; Nothing but Vexation, without the least drop of Consolation. In a word, without these, and wanting these, whom if you
want,

want, it were good to be spoiled of all being, to be nothing, if that could be, or never to have been any thing. Men will seek Death, and cannot find it. O! what a loss and deprivation is the loss of God, which makes Death more desirable than Life; and not to be at all, infinitely preferable to any Being. Now it is true, that the bringing in of multitudes within the pale of the Visible Church, is some degree of access and nearness to God; for then they become Citizens (as to external right) in the Common-wealth of the Church, and have the offers of the Promises made to them, in respect of which visible standing, the Apostle speaks of the whole Church of *Ephesus*, *But now ye are made near, who were far off*, ver. 13. Notwithstanding, that many of them were found afterwards, to have left their First-love, *Rev. 2*. But yet, Beloved, to speak more inwardly, and as your Souls stand in the Sight of God. The generality of those who are near hand in outward Ordinances, are yet far off from God in reality, *Without God, and without Christ*, as really as touching any Soul-feeling, as those who are altogether without. The Bond of Peace and Union was broken in Paradise, Sin dissolved it, and broke off that nearness and friendship with God, and from that Day to this Day, there hath been an infinite distance and separation betwixt Man and God: The steps and degrees of it are many; There is Darkness and Blindness in Mens Minds: Such Ignorance naturally possesseth the Multitude, so that it wholly Alienates them from the Life of God, *Eph. 4. 18*. For what fellowship can Light, that pure Light, have with such gross Darkness as is among us? This certainly, is the removal of that Sun of Righteousness from our Souls, or the imposition of the Clouds of Transgression, that makes it so dark a Night in the Souls of Men. And then there is nothing but Enmity and desperate Wickedness in the Heart of Man, and this keeps the strong hold of the Affections, *Rom. 8. Jer. 17*. There cannot be a further elongation or separation of the

Soul from God, than to turn so opposite in all Inclinations and Dispositions to His Holy Will: For the distance between God and us, is not local in the point of place; For whicher shall we go from him who is every where? - And thus He is near hand every one of us; but it is also real in the dissimilarity and repugnancy of our Natures to His Holy Will. But add unto this, that being thus separated in Affection, and disjoyned (as it were) in Natural Dispositions, we cannot draw near to God in any Ordinance, as the Word, Prayer, &c. Tho' we may, as that People, draw near with our Lips, and ask of him our Duty, and seem to delight to know him; Yet there is this natural incapacity and crookedness in the Heart of Man, that it cannot truly approach unto the Father of Spirits, with any Soul desire and delight. *But their Hearts are removed far from me, Isa. 6. 9. Matth. 4. 12.* I think Men might observe, that their Souls act not in Religious Business as they should; but that they remove their Souls many Miles distant from their Bodies, and they cannot keep any constancy in this approach of Prayer to God, cannot walk with him in their Conversation, or carry him along in their Meditation. But there is one point of estrangement and separation superadded to all, that there is no Man can come near to God, without an Oblation and Offering of Peace; That there is no approaching to Him, but as to a Consuming-fire, except we can bring a Sacrifice to appease, and a Present to please Him for our infinite offences: There the difference stands, we cannot draw near to walk together, till we be agreed. And truly, this unto Man is impossible, for we have nothing so precious as the Redemption of our Souls, nothing can compensate Infinite Wrongs, or satisfy Infinite Justice. Now this seems to make our nearness again desperate, and to put Men furthest off from Hope.

Notwithstanding, this is the very purpose of the Gospel, Preached from the beginning of the World, to remove that distance, and to take impediments

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of meeting out of the way; For that great obstruction, the want of a Sacrifice, and Ransom, the Lord hath supplied it, He Himself hath furnished it: And it was the great design carried on from the beginning of the World: But as the Sun, the nearer he is, the more the Earth is Enlightened; so here, first some dawning of Light appears, as a Messenger of Hope, to tell that the Redeemer shall come, that the True Sacrifice shall be slain; then still the nearer his own appearing, the clearer are the Manifestations of Him, and the great design is more opened up, till at length he breaks out in Glory, from under a Cloud, and shews himself to the World, to be that Lamb of God that should take away the Sins of the World. And now as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaks, Chap. 7. 19. *The Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better Hope did, by the which we draw nigh to God.* All the Sacrifices and Shadows that were under the Law, did but point at this perfect Ransom, and the way of access to God through a Mediator was not so clear, but now the matter is made as hopeful as is possible, the Partition-wall of the Law's Curses, the Hand-writing against us is removed on the Cross, the enmity slain, the distance removed by the Blood of the Cross, being partly filled up by his descent into our Nature, partly by his lower descent in our Nature to suffer Death. And this is the favourable Oblation that we have to present to God, and may have boldness to come nigh because of it. And when once our access is made by the Blood of Jesus Christ, then we are called and allowed to come still nearer, to cleave and adhere to him as our Father, to pray unto Him, to walk with Him; Then we should converse as Friends and Familiars together, then draw nigh to His Light for Illumination, and to Him as the Fountain of Life, for quickning, to place our delight and desire in Him, to forsake all other things, even our Wills and Pleasures, and to lose them, that they may be found in His, to converse

verse much in His Company, and be often in Communication with Him, and Meditation upon Him. This is the very design and substance of the Gospel, it holds forth the way of making up the Breach between Man and God, of bringing you nigh who are yet far off, and nearer who are near hand. Oh let us hearken to it.

S E R M O N VI.

Prov. 27. 1. Boast not thy self of to Morrow, for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.

THere are some peculiar Gifts that God hath given to Man in his first Creation, and endued his Nature with, beyond other living Creatures, which being rightly ordered and improved towards the right Objects, do advance the Soul of Man to a wonderful height of Happiness, that no other sublunary Creature is capable of. But by reason of Man's fall into Sin, these are quite disordered, and turned out of the right Channel; And therefore as the right improvement of them would make Man Happy: so the wrong employment of them, loadens him with more real Misery, than any other Creature: I mean, God hath given to Man two notable Capacities, beyond other things, one is, to know and reflect upon himself, and to consider what conveniency is in any thing towards himself, what goodness or advantage redounds to himself from them, and in that reflection and comparison to enjoy what he hath. Another is to look forward, beyond the present Time, and (as it were) to anticipate and prevent the slow motions of time, by a kind of foresight and providence. In a word, he is a Creature framed unto more understanding than others, and so capable of more joy in present things, and more foresight of the time to come; He is made Mortal, yet
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with an Immortal Spirit, of an Immortal Capricity, that hath its Eye upon the Morrow, upon Eternity. Now herein consists either Man's Happiness or Misery, how he reflects upon himself, and what he chooseth for the matter of his Joy and Gloriation, and what providence he hath for the time to come. If those be rightly ordered, all is well; but if not, then wo unto him, there is more hope of a Beast than of him.

Man's Nature inclines to boasting, to glorying in something, and this ariseth from some apprehended excellency or advantage, and so is originated in the understanding power of Man, which is far above Beasts: Beasts find the things themselves, but they do not, they cannot reflect upon their own enjoyment of them; And therefore they are not capable of such pleasure: for the more distinct knowledge of things in relation to our selves, the more delight ensueth upon it. Many Creatures have singular Qualities and Vertues, but they are nothing the happier; For they know them not, and have no use of them, but are wholly destinated to the use of Man, who therefore is only said to enjoy them, because he only is capable of joy from them. And this, I suppose, may give us a hint, at the absolute incomprehensible Blessedness, Self-complacency and delight of God; It cannot but be immeasurably great, seeing the knowledge of himself and all Creatures is infinite, he comprehends all his own Power and Vertue, and Goodness; And therefore his Delight and Rejoycing is answerable. There is a glorying and boasting then that is good, which Man is naturally framed unto; And this is that which David expresses, Psal. 34. 2. *My Soul shall make her boast in God*; And Psal. 44. 8. *In God we boast all the Day long, and praise thy Name for ever*. When the Soul apprehends that All-sufficiency, and Self-sufficient Fulness of God; What infinite Treasures of Goodness, and Wisdom and Power are in Him, and so how suitable and convenient He is to the Condi-

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tion of the Soul? What a sweet correspondence there is between His Fullness and our Emptiness; His Mercy and our Misery; His Infiniteness and our Unsuitableness, that there is in Him to fill and overflow the Soul. The apprehension of this, cannot but (in a manner) perfume the Soul with delight. You find how the Senses are refreshed, when they meet with their suitable Object; How a pleasant smell refresheth the scent; How lively and beautiful colours are delightful to the Eye. But much more here, God is the proportioned Object of the Immortal Spirit, He corresponds to all its Capacities, and fills it with unceivable sweetness. But, my Beloved, Boasting and Glorifying in Him, ariseth not only from the proportionableness and conveniency of Him to our Spirits: but this must be superadded, Propriety in Him. Things are loved, because excellent in themselves, or because they are our own. But we boast in nothing, we glory in nothing, but because it is both excellent in it self, and ours besides. It is the apprehended interest in any thing, makes the Soul rise and lift up it self after this manner, to have such an one to be ours, such a Lord to be our God, one so high and sublime, one so universally full to be made over to thee; Here is the immediate rise of the Soul's Gloriation. And truly as there is nothing can be so suitable a Portion, so there is nothing that can be so truly made ours as God; Of all things a Believer hath, there is nothing so much his own as God, nothing so indissolubly tied unto him, nothing so inseparably joyned. See *Paul's* Triumph upon that account, *Rom. 8.* Nothing can truly be said to be the Soul's own, but that which is not only Constant with it, that survives Mortality, and the changes of the Body; but likewise is inseparable from it. What a poor empty sound, is all that can be spoken of Him, till your Souls be once possessed of Him? It cannot make your Hearts leap within you, but it cannot but excite and stir up a Believer's Heart.

Now there may be a lawful kind of Gloriation.
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Rejoycing in the Works of God, consequent to the first, which is a little Stream from that great River which runs out from it, and flows in to it again. A Soul that truly apprehends God, will take delight to view the Works of God, which make such an expression of Him, and are a part of the magnificence of our Heavenly Father: But this is all in reference to Him, and not to our selves, for then it degenerates and losseth its sweetness, when once it turns the Channel towards the adorning of the Creature. True boasting in God hath necessarily conioyned with it, an humble and low esteem of a Man's self, Psal 34. 2. *The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.* As Humility and Self-emptiness made David go out of himself, to seek satisfaction in God, and having found it, he boasts and triumphs; so there were none capable of understanding his triumph, or partaking with him in his delights, but the humble Souls. Now you may perceive, how far this boasting here spoken of, is degenerated from that, and so how far Man's Nature is spoiled. *Boast not thy self, &c.* The true boasting we were created unto, hath a sufficient Foundation, even such as will bear the weight of Triumph, but that which Mens Spirits are now naturally set upon, cannot carry, cannot stand such Gloriation; And therefore this boasting makes Men ridiculous. If you saw a Man glorying in Rags, setting forth himself to be admired in them, or boasting in some vain despicable and base thing, you would pity him, or laugh at him as one disordered. The Truth is, Natural Man is mad, hath lost his Judgement, and is under the greatest distraction imaginable since the Fall: That fall hath troubled his Brains, and they are never settled, till the New Creation come to put all right again, and compose the Heart of Man. I say, all other distractions are but particular, in respect to particular things: But there is a general distraction over all Mankind, in reference to things of most General and most Eternal Concernment. Now Fools and Mad Persons, they retain

retain the same Affections and Passions that are in Men, as Anger, Love, Hatred, Grief, Joy, &c. but it is so much the worse, since the Judgement, which is the only Directive and Guide of them is troubled: Now they are set on wrong Objects, they run at random, and are under no kind of Rule, and so they hurry the poor Man, and put him in a pitiful case. Now indeed so it is with us, since Sin entered, the Soul is wholly turned off God, the only True Object of delight, in which only there can be solid Gloriation. The Mind of Man is blinded, and his Passions are strong, and so they are now spent upon empty Vanities, and carried headlong without Judgement. Oftentimes he glories in that which is his shame, and boasts in that which is his Sin, and which will cause nothing but shame, the more weight be laid upon it. There is in Man an Oblivion and forgetfulness of God, and in this darkness of the ignorance of God, every thing is apprehended or misapprehended as present Sense suggests, and as it fancies a conveniency or excellency, thither the Soul is carried as if it were something, and then it is but the East-wind; There is nothing beside God that is a fit matter of boasting, because it lacks one of the Essential Ingredients; Either it is not suitable to the Soul, or it is not truly our own; There wants either proportion to the vast Capacity and void of our Desires, and so cannot fill up that really, but only in a deluding Dream or Imagination, and therefore will certainly make the Issue rather Vexation than Gloriation; Or there wants Property and Interest in them; For they are changeable and perishing in their own Nature, and by Divine appointment, that they cannot be conceived to be the proper Good of the Immortal Soul; They cannot be truly our own, because they will shortly cease to be, and before they cease to be, they may in a Moment cease to be ours: That ty of Interest is a Draw-knot, whatsoever catcheth hold of the end of it, looseth it.

The Object of degenerate and vitious Boasting is
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here held out ; *Boast not thy self, or of thy self.* Whatsoever be the immediat matter of it, this is always the ultimat and principal Object. Since Man fell from God, self is the Center of all his Affections and Motions: This is the great Idol, *the Diana*, that the Heart worships, and all the Contention, Labour, Clamour, and Care that is among Men, is about her Silver Shrines, so to speak, something relating to the adorning or setting forth of this Idol. It is True, since the Heart is turned from that direct subordination to God, the Affections are scattered and parted into infinite Channels, and run towards innumerable Objects ; for the want of that Original Unity, which comprehends in its Bosom Universal Pienty, must needs breed Infinite Variety, to supply the insatiable Appetite of the Soul. And this might be enough to Convince you, that your Souls are quite out of Course, and altogether wandred from the way of Happiness, because they are poured out on such a multiplicity of unsufficient, unsatisfying things, every one of which is narrow, limited and empty, and the combination and concurrence of all, being a thing either impossible or improbable to be attained. But we may conceive, that Mens Affections part themselves into three great heads of created things: One of which, runs towards the Goods or Perfections of the Mind ; Another towards the Goods or Advantages of the Body ; And a Third towards those things that are without us, *bona fortuna*, Riches and Honour, &c. Now each of these send out many Streams, and Rivulets as so many Branches from it ; But all of them, tho' they seem to have a direct course towards other things, yet they wind about and make a circular progress to the great Ocean of Self-estimation, whence they issued at first. You may find all of those, *Jer. 9. 23.* falling under a Divine Interdiction and Curse, as being opposite to glorying in God. While Men reflect within themselves, and behold some Endowments and Abilities in their Minds beyond other Men, of which,

Wisdom

Wisdom is the Principal, and here stands for all inward Advantages or Qualifications of the Soul: In that secret reflection and comparison, there is a tacite Gloriation, which yet is a loud blasphemy in God's Ears. It is impossible almost for a Man to recognise and review his own Parts, such as Ingine, Memory, Understanding, Sharpness of Wit, Readiness of Expression, Goodness and Gentleness of Nature; But that in such a review, the Soul must be puffed up, apprehending some excellency beyond other Men, and taking complacency in it, which are the two Acts of Robbery, that are in Gloriation and Boasting: Commonly this arises from unequal comparisons, we please our selves that we are *deterioribus meliores*, better than the worst, and builds Self estimation upon the ruines of other Mens disadvantages, as if it were any point of praise in us, that they are worse: like Men that stand upon a height, and measure their own Altitude, not from their just intrinsic quantity, but taking the advantage of the Bottom, whereby we deceive our own selves. I remember a word of *Solomons*, that imports how dangerous a thing it is for a Man to reflect upon, or search into his own glory, Prov. 25. 27. *It is not good to eat much Honey: So for Men to search their own glory, is not glory.* To surfeit in the excess of Honey, or Sweet Things, drives to Vomit and cloyes the Stomach, *verse 16.* Tho' it be sweet, there is great need, yea, the more need of Caution and Moderation about it; So for a Man, either to search into his own Breast, and reflect upon his own excellencies, to find matter of Gloriation, or studiously to affect it among others, and enquire into other Mens Account, and Esteem of him, it is no Glory, it is a dangerous and shameful Folly. Now this is not only incident to Natural Spirits upon their Considerations of their own Advantages; but even to the most gracious, upon the review of Spiritual Endowments and Prerogatives: It is such a subtle and insinuating Poyson, that it spreads universally, and infects the most

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Precious Ointments of the Soul, and (as it were)
 Poysons the very Antidot and Counterpoyson; So
 forcible is this that was first dropped into Man's
 Nature by Satan's Envy, that it diffuses it self even
 into Humility and Humiliation it self, and makes
 a Man proud, because of Humility. The Apostle
 sound need to caveat this, Rom, 11. 18, 19, 20.
*Boast not, be not High-minded, but fear, thou stand-
 est by Faith. And Chap. 12. 16. Mind not High
 things. Be not wise in your own Conceits. And
 1 Cor. 8. 2. If any Man think that he knoweth
 any thing, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know.*
 All which, gives us a plain demonstration of this,
 that Self-gloriation and Complacency in reflection
 upon our selves, is both the greatest Ignorance, and
 the worst Sacrilege. It is an Argument of greater
 ignorance for a Man to think he knows, than not
 to know indeed; It is the worst and most danger-
 ous Ignorance, to have such an Opinion of our
 Knowledge, Gifts and Graces; For that puff up,
 swells with empty Wind, and makes a vain tumor:
 And then it is great Sacrilege, a robbing of the
 Honour that is due to God. *For what hast thou
 that thou hast not received? That appropriating
 of these things to our selves as ours, is an appropri-
 ating of them from their right Owner, that is God,*
 1 Cor. 4. 7. For if thou did apprehend that thou
 receivedst it, where then is glorying? I would de-
 sire then, that whenever you happen to reflect upon
 your selves, and observe any advantage either Na-
 tural or Spiritual in your selves, that you may think
 this word sounds from Heaven, *Let him that glo-
 rieth, glory in the Lord. Let not the Wise Man glo-
 ry in his Wisdom: And so not the Learned Man
 in his Learning, nor the Eloquent Man in his Speak-
 ing, nor the Ingenious Man in his Quickness, nor
 the Good Man in his Goodness: All these things
 though sweet, yet will surfeit; Gloriation in them
 is neither Glory nor Gain, neither Honourable nor
 Profitable.*

Then the Stream of Gloriation flows in the Chan-
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nel of Bodily-gifts, as Might, Strength of Body, Beauty and Comeliness of Parts, and other such Endowments; which besides that it is as Irrational as the former, in Sacrilegious Impropration of the most free and Arbitrary Gifts of God to our selves; It is withall absurd, in that it is not so truly our selves: These Bodily-ornaments and Endowments do not perfit or better a Man as a Man. They are but the alterable Qualities of the Vessel or Tabernacle of a Man, in which other baser Creatures may far excell him. How many comely and beautiful Souls, are lodged within obscure and ugly Cottages of Bodies of Clay, which will be taken down: And the great advantage is, that the Soul of a Man, which is a Man, cannot be defiled from without, that is, from the Body, though never so loathsome or deformed: The vilest Body cannot marr the Soul's beauty; But then on the other hand, the most beautiful Body is defiled and deformed, by the filthiness of Sin in the Soul: And O! how many deformed and ugly Souls dwell into beautiful and comely Bodies, which truly is no other thing, than a Devil in an Image well carved and painted. Christians, you had need to correct this within you, even a Self complacency, joyned with despising of others in the consideration of these external Gifts God hath given you. What an abominable thing is it to cast up in Reproach, or in your Hearts to despise any other for Natural Imperfections? Such as Blindness, Lameness, Deformity, or such like. Let that word sound always in your Ears, *Who made thee to differ from another? Boast not thy self,* &c. But there is as strong a Stream runs in the Third Channel, as in any; Gloriation arising from these outward and extrinick differences, that the Providence of God makes among Men, such as Riches, Honour, Gain, &c. You find such Men, *Psal. 49. 6. Prov. 18. 11. and 10. 15.* That which a Godly Man makes the Name of the Lord, that is, the Ground and Foundation of his confidence for present and future times, that the most part of Men

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make their Riches; That is their strong City, and their high Wall, their Hope and Expectation is reposed within it. This is the Tower, or Wall of Defence against the Injuries and Calamities of the Times, which most part of Men are building, and if it go up quickly, if they can get these several Stones or pieces of Gain scraped together into a heap, they straight way imagine themselves safe, as under a high Wall; But there is no Truth in it, it is all but in their Imagination, and therefore it comes often down about their Ears, and offends them in stead of being a Defence. Let a Man creep (as it were) from off the Ground where the poor ly, and get some advantage of ground above them, or be exalted to some Dignity or Office, and so set by the Shoulders higher than the rest of the People, or yet grow in some more abundance of the things of this Life, and strange it is, what a vanity or tumour of mind instantly follows: He presently thinks himself some body, and forgetting either who is above him, to whom all are Worms creeping and crawling on the Footstool; Or what a sandy Foundation he stands upon himself; He begins to take some secret complacency in himself, and to look down upon others below him; He applauds (as it were) unto himself, and takes it in evil part to want the approbation and plaudite of others; Then he cannot so well endure *Affronts* and *Injuries* as before; He is not so meek and condescending to his Equals or Inferiours: While he was poor, he used Intreaties, but now *he answers roughly*, Prov. 18. 23. As Solomon gives the Character of him. How many vain and empty Gloriations are there about the point of Birth and Place, and what foolish contentions about those, as if it were Children struggling among themselves, about the order and rank? There is no worth in these things, but what Fancy and Custom impose upon them; and yet poor Creatures boast in these empty things. The Gentlemen despise Citizens, the Citizens contemn the poor Countrey-men, and yet their Bloods in a Basin have

no different colours; For all this hot contention about Blood and Birth. *Boast not of thy self.* Nay, to speak properly, this is not thy self. *Qui genus laudat suum, aliena jactat.* Such Parents, and such a House is nothing of thy own, these are meer extrinſick things, which neither be a honour to unworthy Men, nor a disgrace to one who is worthy.

You ſee, Beloved in the Lord, what is now the natural poſture or inclination of our Souls in this degenerate and fallen Eſtate, as the Rivers of Para-diſe have changed their Channels and Courſe ſince the Fall, ſo hath Man's Affections, and ſo hath his Gloriation, ſo that it may be truly ſaid, That our Glory is our Shame, and not our Glory. Many glory in Iniquity and Sin, *Pſal.* 10. 3. and 94. 4. but that ſhall undoubtedly be their ſhame, and confeſſion before Men and Angels. How many godleſs Perſons will glory in ſwearing haincus and deep Oaths, and ſome have contented about the victory in it? You account it a point of Gallantry, but this Triumph is like the Devils in Hell upon the devouring of Souls. Some boalt of Drinking, and being able to drink others under the Table: But we ſhould be humbled, and mourn for ſuch abominations. Certain I am, that many boalt of wicked deſigns, and malicious projects againſt their Neighbours, if they can accompliſh them; they account their glory, not to take a wrong without giving a greater; nor to ſuffer an evil word, without twenty worſe in recompence. Alas! this boaiſting will one Day be turned into gnawing of Teeth, and this Gloriation into that gnawing and ever-tormenting Worm of Conſcience. *And what will ye do in the Day of that Viſitation, and where ſhall be your Glory?* But the moſt part glory and boalt in things that profit not, and will become their ſhame, becauſe they glory in them, that is, the Gifts of God, outward or inward, Temporal or Spiritual, wherein there is any advancement above others; Unto whom, I would ſeriously commend this Sentence

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to be pondred duely, *Boast not of thy self.* Whatsoever thou art, or whatsoever thou hast, boast not of thy self for it, think not much of thy self because of it: Tho' there be a difference in God's Donation, yet let there be none in thy Self-estimation: Hath thou more Wisdom and Pregnancy of Wit, or more Learning than another? Think not more of thy self for that, than thou thinkest of the Ignorant and Unlearned who want it: Have that same reflection upon thine own unworthiness, that thou wouldst think reasonable another that wants these Endowments should have: Is there a greater measure of Grace in thee? Boast not, reckon of thy self as abstracted and denuded of that: And let it not add to thy value, or account it thy self, put not in that to make it down-weight, and to make thee prefer thy self secretly to another. Whether it be some larger Fortune in the World, or some higher Place and Station among Men, or some Abilities and Perfections of Body or Mind, which may entice thee secretly to kiss thy Hand, and bow down to thy self, yet remember that thou *boast not*, glory not in any thing, but in the Lord: Let nothing of that kind conciliate more affection to thy self, or more contempt towards others. Let not any thing of that kind be the Rule of thy Self-judging, but rather entertain the view of the other side of thy self, that is the worst, and keep that most in thy Eye, that thou may only glory in God. If thou be a Gentleman, labour to be as humble in Heart, as thou thinkest a Countrey-man, or poor Tenant should be: If thou be a Scholar, be as low in thy own sight, as the unlearned should be: If Rich, count not thy self any whit better than the Poor. Yea, the higher God set thee in Place or Parts, the lower thou ought to set thy self: *Boast not of thy self*, for any thing in thy self, or belonging to thy self, for the property of all Good is taken from us since the Fall, and it is fallen in God's Hand, since we forfeited it, and there is nothing now properly ours, but Evil, that is our self.

SERMON

S E R M O N VII.

Prov. 27. 1. *Boast not thy self of to Morrow, for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.*

AS Man is naturally given to Boasting and Gloriation in something (for the Heart cannot want some Object to rest upon and take complacency into, it is-framed with such a Capacity of employing other things) so there is a strong Inclination in Man towards the time to come, he hath an Immortal Appetite, and an Appetite of Immortality; and therefore his Desires usually stretch farther than the present Hour. And the more Knowledge he hath above other Creatures, the more Providence he hath and foresight of the time to come. And so he often anticipates Future Things, by present Joy and Rejoycing in them, as he accelerates (in a manner) by his earnest Desires and Endeavours after them: Now if the Soul of Man were in the Primitive Integrity, and had as clear and piercing an Eye of Understanding as once it had, this Providence of the Soul would reach to the furthest period in Time; that is, to Eternity, which is the only just measure of the endurance of any Immortal Spirit. But since the Eye of Man's Understanding is Darkness, and his Soul disordered, he cannot see afar off, nor so clearly by far: He is now as you say, Sand-blind, can see nothing at such a distance, as beyond the bounds of Time, can see nothing but at hand, *to Morrow*, this is the narrow Sphere of poor Man's comprehension; All he can attain unto, is to be provident for the present Time: I call it all present, even that which is to come of our Time; because in regard of Eternity it hath no parts, it hath no flux or succession, it is so soon cut off as a moment, as the twinkling of an Eye:

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Eye: And so tho' a Man could see the end of it, it is but a short and dim sight, it is as if a Man could only behold that which is almost contiguous with his Eye. These then are the two great ruines and decays of the Nature of Man; He is degenerated from God to created things, and seeks his Joy and Rest in them, in which there is nothing but the contrare; that is, Vexation. And then he is fallen from apprehension of Eternity, and the poor Soul is confined within the narrow bounds of Time; So that now all his Providence, is to lay up some perishing things for some few Revolutions of the Sun, for some few Morrows, after which, tho' an endless Morrow ensue, yet he perceives it not, and provides not for it; And all his Glorifying and Boasting is only upon some presumptuous confidence, and ungrounded assurance of the stability of these things for the time to come; which the Wise Man finding much folly in, he leaves us this Counsel, *Boast not thy self of to Morrow*, with a most pungent reason, taken partly from the instability and inconstancy of all these outward things, in which Men fancy an Eternity of Joy, and partly from the Ignorance we have of the future events, *For thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.*

This Boasting is an evil so predominant among Men, that I know not any more universal in its Dominion, or more hurtful to us, or displeasing to God. If it could be so embowelled unto you, as that you might truly discern the many monstrous conceptions of Atheism and Irreligion that are in it, it were worth the while. But I shall not digress upon the general head, I had rather keep within the limits of the Text. Self-boasting you see, is that which is here condemned, and the very Name is almost enough to condemn the Nature of it. But there is another particular added to restrict that, *Of to Morrow*. Of all Boastings the most irrational and groundless is that which arises from presumption of future things, which are so uncertain both in themselves and to us.

It is worth the observation, that whatever be the immediate and particular matter and occasion of Mens Gloriation, yet *Self* is the great and ultimate Object of it: It is *Self* that Men Glory into, whatsoever created thing be the reason or occasion of it. *Boast not thy self of to Morrow.* Here we might stand and take a look of the crookedness and perverseness of Man's Spirit, since his departure from God; Self-love and Pride were the first poyson that the Malice of Satan dropped into Man's Nature, and this is so strong and pestilent, that it hath spread through the whole of Mankind, and the whole in every Man. Every one is infected, and all in every one. What are all the disordered Affections in Men, but so many Streams from this Fountain? And from these do Mens Affections flow next: So that there is nothing left uncorrupted, and free of this abominable and vile ingredient: All flowing from *Self*, and returning to it again, which is both sacrilegious and unnatural. There is hainous Sacrilege in it, the spoiling of the Glorious Divine Majesty, of his Indubitable Prerogative and Incommunicable Right of all the Glory and Honour of his Creatures: There is no usurpation like this, for the Worm that crawls on the Footstool, to creep up to the Throne, and (as it were) to King it there, to Deifie and Adore it self, and gather in all the Tribute of Praise and Glory, and Love, that is only due to the Lord God Almighty, and invert and unpropriet these to our selves; which is, as if the Ax should boast it self, as if it were no Iron, or the Staff, as if it were no Timber. Hence it is, that of all Evils in Man's Nature, God hath the most perfect Antipathy, and direct Opposition against Pride and Self-love, because it is Sacrilege and Idolatry in the highest manner, it strikes at the Sovereignty and Honour of God's Name, which is dear to Him as Himself, it sets up a vile Idol in the choicest Temple of God, that is, in the Heart: And this is the Abomination of Desolation: Other Evils strike against his Holy Will:

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But this peculiarly points at the very Nature and Being of the Most High God, and so it is with Child of Blasphemy, Atheism is the very Heart and Life of it. And then it is most unnatural, and so monstrous and deformed. For, consider all the Creation, though every one of them have particular Inclinations towards their own proper ends, and so a Happiness suitable to their own Nature; yet how divers, how contrary soever they be, there is no selfishness in them; They all concur and conspire to the good of the whole, and the mutual help of each other. If once that Poyson should infect the Material World, which hath spoiled the Spiritual, let once such a selfish disposition or inclination possess any part of the World, and presently the Order, Harmony, Beauty, Pleasure and Profit of the whole World should be Interrupted, Defaced and Destroyed. Let the Sun be supposed to boast it self of its Light and Influence, and so disdain to impart it to the lower World, and all would run into confusion. Again, I desire you but to take a view of this Humour in anothers Person; (For we are more ready to see others Evils than our own) and how deformed is it? So vile is Self-seeking, and Self-boasting, that all Men loath it in others, and hide it from others: It disgraces all Actions, how beautiful soever; It is the very bane of Humane Society, that which looses all the Links of it, and makes them cross and thwart one another.

But, alas! how much more easie is it, to paint out such an Evil in a deformed Visage, than to discern it in our selves? And how many will hate it in the Picture, who love and entertain it in their own Persons, such deceitfulness is intermingled with most desperate wickedness? I verily believe that it is the predominant of every Man good and bad, except in as far as it is mortified by Grace. O! the turnings and windings of the Heart upon it self, in all the most apparently direct Mo-

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tions towards God and the Good of Men! What serpentine and crooked Circumgyrations, and reflections are there in the Soul of Man, when the outward Action and Expression seems most regular, and directed towards God's Glory and others Edification? Whoever of you have any acquaintance with your own Spirits, cannot but know this, and be ashamed and confounded at the very thought of it. Self-boasting, Self-complacency, Self-seeking, all those being of Kin one to another, are insinuated into your best Notions, and infect them with more Atheism before God, than the strongest pious Affection can instill of Goodness into them. How often will Mens Actions and Expressions be outwardly clothed with a habit of Condescendency and Self denial? And many may declaim with such Zeal and Vehemency against this Evil, and yet *Latet anguis*: The Serpent is in the Bosom, and his Venom may be diffused into the Heart, and the Poyson of Self seeking and Self-boasting, may run thorow the Veins of Humble-like Carriage and Passionate Discourses for Self denial. Oh that we could above all things, establish that Fundamental Principle of Christianity in our Hearts, even as we would be His Disciples, truly and sincerely, and not in outward resemblance, to deny ourselves, to renounce our selves, and our Lusts, to make a whole Resignation of our Love, Will, Glory, and all to Him, in whom to be lost, it is only truly to find our selves.

But though Man have this strange Self-idolizing Humour, and a Self glorying Disposition, yet he is so poor and beggarly a Creature, that he hath not sufficient matter within himself, to give complacency to his Heart; therefore he must borrow from all External Things; And when there is any kind of Propriety in, or Title to them, then he glories in himself for them, as if they were truly in himself. We are Creatures by Nature most indigent, yet most proud, which is unnatural. No Man is satisfied within himself (except the Good Man,

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Man, Prov. 14. 14.) but he goes abroad to seek it at the Door of every Creature; And when there are some Plumes or Feathers borrowed from other Birds, like that foolish Bird in the Fable, we begin to raise our Crests and boast our selves, as if we had all these of our own, and were beholden to none. But as things that are truly our own, will not be sufficient to feed this Flame of Gloriation, without the accession of outward things: So present things and the present time will not afford Aliment enough or Fuel for this Humour, without the addition of the Morrow.

Boast not thy self of to Morrow.] No Man's present Possession satisfies him, without the addition of Hope and Expectation for the Future. And herein the Poverty of Man's Spirit appears, and the emptiness of all things we enjoy here, that our present Revenue, as it were, will not content the Heart: The present Possession fills not up the Vacuities of the Heart, without the supply of our Imaginations, by taking so much in upon the head of the Morrow, to speak so: As one Prodigal and Riotous Waster, who cannot be served with his yearly incomes, but takes so much on upon his Estate, upon the next Years income, before it come, begins to spend upon it, before it come it self, and then when it comes it cannot suffice it self; So the insatiable and indigent Heart of Man cannot subsist and feed its Joy in Complacency upon the whole World, if it were presently in its possession, without some accession of Hopes and Expectations for the Time to come. Therefore the Soul, as it were, Anticipats and Forestals the Morrow, and borrows so much present Joy and Boasting upon the head of it, which when it comes it self, perhaps it will not fill the Hand of the Reaper, let be pay for that Debt of Gloriation that was taken on upon its name, or compensate the expectation was in it. See Job 11. 18, 20. and 8. 13. Hope is like a Man's House to him, but to many it is no better than a Spider's

Web. We have then a clear Demonstration of the madness and folly of Men, who hang so much upon things without, and suffer themselves to be moulded and modelled in their Affections, according to the variety of external accidents: *First* of all, Consider the independence of all things upon us and our choice, there is nothing more unreasonable, than to stir our Passions upon that which falls not under our deliberation, as the most part of things to come are. What shall be to Morrow? what shall come of my Estate, of my Places, what event my Projects and Designs shall have? this is not in my hand; These depends upon other Mens Wills, Purposes and Actions, which are not in my power; And therefore, either to boast or glory upon that which depends upon the concurrence of so many Causes un- subordinate to me, or to be vexed and disquieted upon the fore apprehension of that which is not in my Hand to prevent, it is not only Irreligious, as contrary to our Saviour's Command, *Matth. 6.*—but unreasonable also, as that which even Nature condemns: *Take not thought for to Morrow*; and so by consequent, *Boast not of to Morrow*. And there's one Argument from the vanity of such Affections, *Thou canst not make one Hair black, nor add one Cubit to thy Stature, &c.* To what purpose then, are either these Vexations or Gloriations, which cannot prevent Evil, nor procure Good? Why should our Affections depend upon others Motions? This makes a Man the greatest Slave and Captive, so that he hath not the Dominion and Power of himself. But the vanity of such Affections is the more increased, if we consider that Supreme Eternal Will, by which all these things are determined; And therefore, it is in vain for Creatures to make themselves more miserable, or put themselves in a Fool's Paradise, which will produce more misery afterwards, and that for these things, which are bound up in that fatal Chain of his Eternal Purpose. Then in the next place, the Folly of Men appears from the inconstancy of these Things; there is such an

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infinite variety of the Accidents of Providence, that it is folly for a Man to presume to boast of any thing, or take complacency in it, because many things fall between the Cup and the Lip, the Chalice and the Chin, as the Proverb is. There is nothing certain, but that all things are uncertain, that all things are subject to perpetual Motion, Revolution and Change; To Day a City, to Morrow a Heap. And there is nothing between a great City and a Heap, but one Day; Nothing between a Man and no Man, but one Hour: Our Life is subject to infinite Casualties: It may receive the Fatal Stroke from the meanest thing, and most unexpected; it is a Bubble floating upon the Water; For this World is a watery Element, in continual Motion with Storms, and in these, so many poor dying Creatures rise up, and swim and float a while, and are tossed up and down by the Wind and Wave, and the least puff of Wind, or drop of Rain sends it back to its own Element: We are a Vapour appearing for a very little Time, a Creature of no solidity, a Dream, a Shadow and Appearance of something; And this Dream, or Apparition is but for a little time, and then it vanisheth, not so much into nothing, for it was little distant from nothing before, but it disappears rather. All Humane Affairs are like the Spokes of a Wheel, in such a continual Circumgyration, as a Captive King who was drawing *Sesostrius* Chariot, said, when he was looking often behind him, The King of *Egypte Sesostrius* demanded, for what end did he look so often about him? Says he, I am looking to the Wheel, musing upon the Vicissitudes and Permutations of it, how the highest parts are instantly lowest; And this word repressed the King's vain glory. Now in this constant wheeling of outward things, which is the Soul, that enjoys true quiet and peace: Even that Soul, that is fixed (as it were) in the Center, upon God, that hath its abode in him: Though the parts without be in a continual violent Motion, yet the Center of the Wheel is at much peace, is

not violently turned, but gently complies to the changes of the other. And then consider the madness of this, *Thou knowest not, &c.* There are Two Reasons in the Things themselves, Inconstancy, and Independency on us; But this is as pressing as any, our Ignorance of them: They are wholly in the dark to us, as it were, in the lower parts of the Earth. As there is no more in our Power, but the present Hour, for to Yesterday we are dead already, for it is past and cannot return, it is (as it were) buried in the Grave of Oblivion: And to Morrow, we are not yet born, for it is not come to the Light, and we know not if ever it will come; So there is no more in our Knowledge, but the present Hour. The Time past, though we remember it, yet it is without our Practical Knowledge, it admits of no Reformation by it: And the Time to come, it is not born to us, and it's all one as if we were not born to it. And indeed in the Lord's disposing of all Affairs under the Sun, after this Method, there is infinite Wisdom and Goodness both, tho' at the first view, Men would think it better, that all things went on after an uniform manner; And that Men knew what were to befall them: Yet, I say, God hath herein provided for His own Glory, and the Good of Men: His own Glory, while He hath reserved to Himself, the absolute Dominion, and perfect Knowledge of His Works, and exercises them in so great variety, that they may be seen to proceed from Him; And for our Good, for what place were there for the exercise of many Christian Vertues and Graces, if it were not so? What place for Patience, if there were no cross Dispensations? What place for Moderation, if there were no Prosperity? If there were not such Variety and Vicissitude, how should the evenness and constancy of the Spirit be known? Where should Contentment and Tranquillity of Mind have place? For it is a Calm in a Storm properly, not a Calm in a Calm, that is no Vertue. If the several Accidents of Providence were fore-
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seen by us, what a marvellous Perturbation and Disorder would it make in our Duty? Who would do his Duty out of Conscience to God's Command, to commit Events to him? Now there is the trial of Obedience, *to make us go by a way we know not*, and resign our selves to *All seeing Providence, whose Eyes run to and fro throughout the Earth*. Therefore, that no Grace may want matter and occasion of exercise, that no Vertue may die out, for want of Fewel, or rust for lack of Exercise, God hath thus Ordered and Disposed the World. There is no Condition, no Posture of Affairs, in which he hath not left a fair Opportunity, for the exercising of some Grace: Hath He shut up and precluded the Acting of one, or many through Affliction? Then surely He hath opened a wide Door, and given large matter for Self-denial, Humility, Patience, Moderation; And these are as precious, as any that look fairest. In a word, I think the very Frame and Method of the disposing of this Material World, speaks aloud to this purpose. You see, when you look below, there is nothing seen but the outside of the Earth, the very Surface of it only appears, and there your sight is terminated; But look above, and there is no termination, no bounding of the Sight, there are infinite Spaces, all are transparent and clear, without and within. Now what may this represent unto us? One says, It shews us that our Affections should be set upon things above, and not on things below, seeing below there is nothing but an outward appearance and surface of things, the Glory and Beauty of the Earth, is but Skin-deep; But Heavenly Things are alike throughout, all Transparent, nothing to set bounds to the Affections, they are infinite, and you may enlarge infinitely towards them. I add this other Consideration, that God hath made all Things in Time, Dark and Opaque, like the Earth: look to them, you see only the outside of them, the present Hour, and what is beyond it, you know no more than you see, the

Bowels of the Earth. But Eternity is both Transparent and Conspicuous throughout, and infinite too. Therefore God hath made us blind to the one, that we should not set our Heart, nor terminate our Eyes upon any thing here; But He hath opened and spread Eternity before us in the Scriptures, so that you may read and understand your Fortune, your Everlasting Estate in it. He hath shut up Temporal Things, and Sealed them, and wills us to live implicitly, and give Him the Trust of them without anxious foresight; But Eternity He hath unveiled and opened unto us. Certain it is, that no Man till he be fully possessed of God, who is an All-sufficient Good, *Psal. 4.* can find any satisfaction, in any present Enjoyment without the addition of some Hope for the Future. Great things without it will not content; for what is it all to a Man, if he have no Assurance for the Time to come, and mean things with it, will content? Great things with little Hope and Expectation, fill with more Vexation in stead of Joy, and the greater they be, this is the more increased. Again, mean and low things, with great Hopes and large Expectations, will give more satisfaction. Therefore, all Mankind have a look toward the Morrow, and labour to supply their present defects and wants with hope or confidence of that. I would exhort you who would indeed have solid matter of Gloriation, and would not be befooled into a Golden Dream of vain Expectations of vain things, that ye would labour to fill up the Vacuities of present things, with that great Hope; the Hope of Salvation, which will be as an Helmet to keep your Head safe in all difficulties, *1 Pet. 1. 3. Heb. 6. 18, 19. Rom. 5. 5.* It is true, other Mens Expectations of Gain and Credit, and such things; do in some measure, abate the torment and pain of present wants and indigencies: But certain it is, that such hope is not so Sovereign a Cordial to the Heart, as to expell all Grief, but leaves much Vexation within. But then also, the frequent disappoint-

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ment of such Projects and Designs of Gain, Honour and Pleasure, and the extream unanswerableness of these to the Desires and Hopes of the Soul, even when attained, must needs breed infinite more Anxiety and Vexation in the Spirit, than the Hope of them could give of Satisfaction; Yea, the more the Expectation was, it cannot choose, but the greater Shame and Confusion must be. Therefore, if you would have your Souls truly established, and not hanging upon the Morrow uncertainly, as the most part of Men are, get a look beyond the Morrow, unto that Everlasting Day of Eternity, that hath no Morrow after it; *And see what Foundation you can lay up for that time to come, as Paul bids Timothy counsel the Rich Men in the World, who thought their Riches and Revenues, their Offices and Dignities, a Foundation and Well-spring of Contentment to them and their Children, and are ready to say with that Man in the Parable, Soul, take thy rest, thou hast enough laid up for many years. Charge them; (says he)* *Sec. 1 Tim. 6. 16, 17, 18, 19.* O! a Charge worthy to be engraven on the Tables of our Hearts; worthy to be written on the Ports of all Cities, and the Gates of all Palaces. You would all have a Foundation of lasting Joy, says he; But why seek you lasting Joy in fading things? And certain Joy in uncertain Riches, and solid Contentment in empty things, and not rather in the Living God, who is the inexhausted Spring of all Good Things? Therefore, if you would truly boast of to Morrow, or sing a solid Requiem to your own Hearts; There is another Treasure to be laid up in store against the time to come; The Time only worthy to be called Time, that is Eternity; And that is, truly to do Good, and be Rich in Good Works, in Works of Piety, of Mercy, of Equity, of Sobriety. This is a better Foundation for the Time to come; Or rather receive and embrace the Promise of Eternal Life, made to such, that free and gracious promise of Life in the

Gospel; And so you may supply all the wants and indigencies of your present Enjoyments, with the Precious Hope of Eternal Life which cannot make ashamed. But what is the way that the most part of Men take to mitigate and sweeten their present hardships? Even like that of the Fool's in the Parable, *Luke 12*. They either have something laid up for many Years, or else their Projects and Designs reach to many Years: The truth is, they have more pleasure in the expectation of such things, nor in the real possession, but that pleasure is but imaginary either. How many Thoughts and Designs are continually turning in the Heart of Man, how to be Rich, how to get greater Gain, or more Credit? Men build Castles in the Air, and fancy to themselves, as it were, new Worlds of meer possible Beings, and in such an imployment of the Heart, there is some poor deceiving of present Sorrows, but at length they recurre with greater violence. Every Man makes *Romances* for himself, pretty Fancies of his own Fortune, as if he had the disposing of it himself; He sits down, as it were, and writes an Almanack and Prognostication in his own Secret Thoughts, and designs his own Prosperity, Gain and Advantage, and Pleasures or Joys; And when we have thus ranked our Hopes and Expectations, then we begin to take complacency in them, and boast our selves in the confidence of them, as if there were not a Supream Lord who gives a Law to our Affairs, as immediatly, as to the Winds and Rains.

Now that you may know the Folly of this, Consider the Reason which is subjoyned, *For thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth*. There is a concurrence of inconstancy in all Things, and Ignorance in us, which might be sufficient to check our Folly of confident and presumptuous expectation from them, and gloriation in them: So that whether we look about us to the things themselves, or within us to our selves, all things proclaim the folly and madness of that which the Heart of Man

is set upon. And this double Consideration the Apostle *James* opposes to the vain hopes and confident undertakings of Men, *Chap. 4. 13, &c.* which place is a perfect Commentary upon this Text: He brings in an instance of the Resolutions and Purposes of Rich Men, for the compassing of Gain by Merchandise, whereby you may understand all the several Designs and Plots of Men, that are contrived and ordered, and laid down in the Hearts of Men, either for more Gain, or more Glory, or more Pleasure and Ease. Now the Grand Evil that is here reprov'd, is not simply Mens Care and Diligence in using lawful means for their accomodation in this Life, or yet their wise and prudent foresight in ordering of their Affairs for attaining that end, for both these are frequently recommended and commended by the Wise Man, *Prov. 6. 6. and 24. 27.* But here is the great Iniquity, that Men in all these Contrivings and Actings, carry themselves as if they were absolute Independents, without consideration of the Sovereign Universal Dominion of God. No Man almost reflects upon that Glorious Being, which alone hath the Negative and Definitive Sentence in all the Motions and Affairs of the Sons of Men, or considers, that it is not in Man that walks, to direct his Paths, that when all our Thoughts and Designs are Marshall'd and Ordered, and the compleatest preparation made for reaching our intended ends, that yet the way of Man is not in himself; That all these things are under a higher and more absolute Dominion of the most High God. Whose Heart doth that often sound unto? *A Man's Heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directs his Steps:* And so is not bound by any Rule to conform his Executions to our Intentions? For He works all according to the Counsel of His own Will, and not ours; And therefore no wonder that the product of our Actions do not answer our Intentions and Devices, because the Supreme Rule and Measure of them is a Love our Power, and

and without our Knowledge. And therefore, tho' there were never so many Devices in the Heart of Man, never so wisely or lawfully Contrived and Ordered; Though the Mine be never so well prepared, and all ready for the Firing of it; Yet the Counsel of the Lord, that shall Stand, Prov. 19. 21. and 16. 9. That higher determination may blow up our best Consultations, or drown them, for Man's goings is of the Lord, how then can a Man understand his Paths, Prov. 20. 24. And yet the most part of Men in all these things lose the remembrance of this fatal and invincible Subordination to God, and propose their own Affairs and Actions, as if themselves were to dispose of them; And when their own Resolutions and Projects seem probable, they begin to please themselves in them, in the Fore-thought of what they will do, or what they may have, or enjoy to Morrow afterward: There is a present secret Complacency and Gloriation, without any serious reminding the absolute dependence of all things upon the Will of God, and their independence upon our Counsels, without forecasting and often ruminating upon the perpetual fluctuation and constant inconstancy of Humane Affairs, but as if we were the Supreme Moderators in Heaven and Earth, so we Act and Transact our own Business in a deep forgetfulness of him who sits in Heaven and laughs at all our Projects and Practices. And therefore, the Holy Ghost would have this secret but serious thought to season all our other Purposes and Consultations, *If the Lord will, &c.* Whereas we ought to say and think this, it is scarce minded: And then we know not what shall be to Morrow, for our Life it self is a Vapour. Herein is a strong Argument, you lay your Designs for to Morrow, for a Year, for many Years, and yet ye know not, if ye shall be to Morrow. How many Mens Projects are cast beyond that time that is measured out in God's Counsel? And what a ridiculous thing must that be to him, if it be not done with submissive and humble dependence on Him?

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In a word, Time is with Child of innumerable things, conceived by the Eternal Counsel of God; Infinite and inconceivably various are these Conceptions which the Womb of Time shall at length bring forth to Light; every Day, every Hour, every Minute is travelling in pain, as it were, and is delivered of some one Birth or another, and no Creature can open its Womb sooner, or shut it longer than the appointed and prefixed Season; There is no miscarrying as to Him whose Decrees do properly conceive them, tho' to us they seem often abortive. Now joyn unto this to make the Allusion full, as long as they are carried in the Womb of Time, they are hid from all the World; The Womb is a dark Lodging, and no Understanding nor Eye can pierce into it, to tell what is in it, till it break forth; And therefore, Children born are said to come to the Light: for till then, they are to us in a Cloud of Darknes, that we cannot tell what they are; So then, every Day, every Hour, every Moment is about to bring forth that which all the World is ignorant of, till they see it; And Oh that then they understood it. We know not whether the Morrows or next Hours Birth may be a Proportioned Child, or a Monster, whether it will answer the Figure and Mould that is in our Mind, or be mishappen and deformed to our Sense. Man's Desires and Designs may be said to conceive, for they form an inward Image and Idea within themselves, to which they labour to make the Product and Birth of Time conformable; And when it answers our preconceived form, then we rejoyce as for a Man-child. But for the most part it is a Monster as to our Conception, it is an Aberration from our Rule; It is either mutilate and defective of what we desire, or superfluous or deformed, which turns our Expectation into Vexation, and our Boasting into Lamentation. But the truth is, Time brings forth no Monsters as to the Lord's Decrees, which are the only just measures of all things: It may be said of every thing under the Sun,

Son, as David speaks of himself in the Womb; *My Substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously formed in the lowest parts of the Earth, &c.* Psal. 139. 15. His Eyes see all their Substance: Yet being imperfect, and in His Everlasting Book all their Members are written; The Portraiture of every thing is drawn there to the Life, and these in continuance are fashioned, just as they were written and drawn, and so they exactly correspond to His Pre-conception of them, whatever deformity they may have as to us, yet they are perfect Works, and beautiful to Him.

S E R M O N VIII.

Isa. i. 10, 11, &c. Hear the Word of the Lord, ye Rulers of Sodom, give ear unto the Word of the Lord, ye People of Gomorrah.

IT is strange to think what Mercy is mixed with the most Wrath-like Strokes and Threatnings; There is no Prophet whose Office and Commission is only for Judgement: Nay, to speak the Truth, it is Mercy that premises Threatnings. The entering of the Law both in the Commands and Curses, is to make Sin abound that Grace may superabound; So that both Rods and Threatnings are the Messengers of Jesus Christ to bring Sinners to Him for Salvation: Every thing should be measured and named by its end; So, call Threatnings Promises, call Rods and Judgements Mercies; Name all good, and good to you, if so be ye understand the purpose of God in these. The shortest Preaching in the Bible useth to express it self what it means, tho' it be never so terrible. This is a sad and lamentable beginning of a Prophet's Ministry; The first word is, *To the Heavens, and so the Earth,*

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A weighty and horrible regrave of this People, as if none of them were to hear, as if the Earth could be more easily affected than they. The Creatures are taken Witnesses by God of their ingratitude, and then who shall speak for them? If Heaven and Earth be against them, who shall speak good of them? Will their own Conscience? No certainly, it will in the Day of Witnessing and Judging precipitate its Sentence, and spare the Judge the labour of Probation; A Man's Enemy shall be within his own House, tho' now your Consciences agree with you: Nay, why doth the Lord speak to them? Because the People consider not, because Consciences have given over speaking to them; Therefore the Lord directs His Word to the dumb Earth: Yet how Gracious is He, as to direct a Second Word even to the People, tho' a sad word. It is a complaint of Iniquity and Backsliding, and such as cannot be uttered: Yet it is Mercy to Challenge them, yea, to Chasten them. If the Lord would Threaten a Man with pure and unmixed Judgements, if He would frame a Threatning of a Rod of pure Justice, I think it should be this, I will no more Reprove thee, nor Chasten thee; And He is not far from it, when He says, *Why shall ye be stricken any more?* &c. verse 5. As if He would say, It is in vain now to send a Rod, ye receive no Correction; I sent the Rod that it might open your Hearts and Ears to the Word, and Seal your Instruction, but to what purpose is it? Ye grow worse and worse: Well, the Prophet compares here Sin and Judgement, and the one far surmounts the other. Ye would think a desolate Countrey, burnt Cities, Desolation made by Strangers, a sufficient recompense of their Corruption and Misforders, of their forsaking and backsliding. Ye would think now, if your present condition and the Lands pressed you to utter *Jeremiah's Lamentation*, a sadder than which is not almost imaginable, ye would think, I say, that you had received double for all your Sins: And yet alas! how are your Iniquities

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of infinite more desert? All that were Mercy, which is behind infinite and eternal punishment: that there is room left for complaint, it is Mercy: that there is a Remnant left, it is Mercy.

Now to proclaim unto this People, and to convince them that their Judgement was not severe; He gives them one word from God. And indeed it is strange, that when the Rod is sent, because of the despising of the Word, that after the despising of both Word and Rod, another word should come. Always this Word is a Convincing Word, a Directing Word, and a Comforting Word; These use to be conjoyned, and if they be not always expressed, we may lawfully understand them: We may joyn a Consolation to a Conviction, and close a Threatning with a Promise, if we take with a Threatning: *Jonah's* Preaching expressed no more but a Threatning and Denunciation of Judgement, but the People understood it according to God's meaning, and made it a Rule of Direction, and so a Ground of Consolation. How inexcusable are we who have all these expressed unto us, and often inculcated, *Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept*, and yet so often divides the Word of Truth, or neglects it altogether? Most part fancy a belief of the Promises, and neither consider Threatnings nor Commands: Some believing the Threatnings, are not so wise for their own Salvation, as to consider what God says more, but takes it for his last word. Shall not *Nineveh* rise up in Judgement against this Generation? They Repented at one Preaching, and that a short one, and in appearance very defective: And yet we have many Preachings of the Son of God, and His Apostles in this Bible, both Law and Gospel holden forth distinctly, and these spoken daily in our audience, and yet we Repent not.

This is a strange Preface going before this Preaching, and more strange in that it is before the first Preaching of a Young Prophet. He speaks both to Rulers and People, but he gives them a Name, such as, certainly they would not take to themselves,

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but seeing he is to speak the Word of the Lord, he must not flatter them, as they did themselves. Is not this the Lord's People, His Portion and Inheritance which He chose out of the Nations? Are not these Rulers the Princes of *Judah*, and the Lord's Anointed? Were they not both in Covenant with God, and separated from the Nations both in Privileges and Profession? How then are they *Rulers of Sodom, and People of Gomorrah*? Likened to the worst of the Nations; And not likened to them, but spoken of, as if they were indeed all one. When ye hear the Preface, ye would think that the Prophet were about to direct his Speech to *Sodom and Gomorrah*: But when ye look upon the Preaching, ye find he means by *Judah and Jerusalem*, and these are the Rulers and People he speaks of. Certainly, according as Men walk, so shall they be Named and Ranked; External Privileges and Profession may give a Name before Men, and separate Men from Men before the World; But they give no Name, make no difference before God, if all other things be not suitable to these. *He is not a Jew (saith Paul) who is not one inwardly, but he who hath that Circumcision in the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter.* Outward Profession and Signs may have praise of Men, but it is this that hath praise of God, Rom. 2. 28, 29. *Circumcision and Uncircumcision, Baptism or Unbaptism availeth nothing, but a New Creature.* A Baptized Christian, and an Unbaptized Turk are alike before God, if their Hearts and ways be one, Gal. 6. 15. All Christians profess Faith, and glory in Baptism, but it avails nothing, except it work by Love, Gal. 5. 6.

Now what Name shall we give you? How shall our Rulers be called? How shall ye the People be called? If we shall speak the Truth, we fear it instruct you not, but Irritate you; Yet the Truth we must speak, whether ye chuse, or whether ye refuse. Ye would all be called Christians, the People of God: But we may not call you so, except we

we would flatter you, and deceive you by flattering, and murder you by deceiving. We would gladly Name you Christians in the Spirit, Saints chosen and precious. Oh that we might speak so to Rulers and People! But alas! we may not call you so, except ye were so indeed: We may not call you Christians, lest ye believe your selves to be so: And yet alas! ye will think your selves such, speak what we can: Would ye know your Name then? I perceive ye listen to hear what it is. But understand that it is your Name before God, which bears His account of you: What matter of a Name among Men? It is often a Shadow without Substance, a Name without the Thing. If God Name you otherways, you shall have little either Honour or Comfort in it: When Men bless you, and praise you, if the Lord reckon you among the Beasts that perish, are ye honoured indeed? Well then, hear your Name before God, what account hath He of you? Ye Rulers, are Rulers of Sodom, and ye People, are People of Gomorrah. And if ye think this a hard saying, I desire you will notice the way that the Prophet *Isaiah* takes to prove his Challenge against them, and the same may be alledged against Rulers, and People now. We need no proof but one of both. See verse 23. *Thy Princes are rebellious*, because, tho' they hear much against their Sins, yet they never amend them, they pull away the Shoulder: If they hear, yet they harden their Hearts. Is there any of them hath set too to Pray in their Families, tho' earnestly pressed? Well, what follows? *Every one loves Gifts*. Covetousness then and Oppression proves Rulers to be Rulers of Sodom. Shall their Houses stand? *Shalt thou reign, because thou clovest thy self with Cedar?* Jer. 22. 15. No certainly, Men shall one Day take up a Proverb against them, *Wo to him that increases that which is not his, and loadeth himself with thick Clay, they shall be for Booties to the Lord's spoilers*, Habak. 2. 6, 7. Wo to them, for they have consulted shame to their Houses,

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Houses, and Sinned against their own Soul. Their design is to establish their House, and make it Eminent, but they take a compendious way to shame and ruin it. Alas! it is too publick that Rulers seek their own things, for themselves, and their Friends: And for Jesus and His Interests, they are not concerned? But are ye the People any whit better? Oh that it were so. But alas! when ye are involved in the same guiltiness, I fear ye partake of their Plagues. What are ye then? *People of Gomorrah*. Is not the Name of God blasphemed daily because of you? Are not the abominations of the *Gentiles* the common Disease of the Multitude, and the very Reproach of Christianity? Set apart your Publick Services and Professions, and is there any thing behind in your Conversation, but Drunkenness, Lying, Swearing, Contention, Envy, Deceit, Wrath, Covetousness, and such like? Have not the multitude of them been as Civil, and carried themselves as blamelessly, and without Offence, as the throng of our Visible Church? What have ye more than they? It is True, ye are called Christians, and ye boast in it. Ye know his Will, and can speak of Points of Religion, can Teach and Instruct others, and so hath, as it were, in your Minds a Form and Method of Knowledge, the best of you are but such: But I ask, as *Paul* did the *Jews* in such a case, *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? Thou that makest a boast of the Law, through breaking of it, dishonourest thou God?* Rom. 2. 17, &c. 23. Why then, certainly all thy Profession and Baptism avails nothing, and will never extract thee from the *Pagans*, with whom thou art one in Conversation; Thy Profession is so far from helping thee in such a case, that it shall be the most bitter ingredient in thy Cup of Judgement, for it is the greatest Aggravation of thy Sin, for through it, God's Name is blasphemed; *If they had not known, they had not had Sin*. Pagans Sin is no Sin in respect of Christians: If ye consider Christ's Sermon, *Matth. 12.*

Ye will say, *Isaiah* is a meek and moderate Man in regard of him; *Isaiah* calls them People of *Gomorrhah*, but Christ will have them worse, and their Judgement more intollerable than theirs. And that not only the profane of them, but the civil and Religious-like, who believed not in him: Well then, here is the advantage ye get of your Name of Christianity, of your priviledge of hearing his Word daily; Ye who never ponder it, to tremble at it, or to rejoyce in it, who cannot be moved either to Joy or Grief for Spiritual Things; Neither Law nor Gospel moves the most part of you: I say, here is all your gain, ye shall receive a reward with *Gentiles* and *Pagans*; Yes, ye shall be in a worse case nor they in the Day of the Lord. The Civil Christian shall be worse than the Profane *Turk*, and ye shall not then boast that ye were Christians, but shall desire that ye had dwelt in the place where the Gospel had never been preached: It is a Character of the Nations, *That they call not on God*, and of *Heathen Families*, *That they Pray not to Him*, Jer. 10. 25. And Wrath must be poured on them. What then are the most part of you? Ye neither bow a Knee in Secret, nor in your Families to God, your Time is otherways employed, ye have no leisure to Pray Twice or Thrice a Day alone, except when ye put on your Clothes ye utter some ordinary babblings; Ye cannot be driven to Family-worship, shall not God rank you in Judgement with these *Heathen Families*? Or shall it not be more tollerable for them nor for you? And are not the most part of you, every one given to Covetousness, your Heart and Eye after it, seeking Gain and Advantage more than the Kingdom of Heaven? Doth not every one of you, as you have power in your Hand, oppress one another? wrong one another? Now our end in speaking thus to you, is not to drive you to Desparation; No indeed, but as there was a word of the Lord sent to such by *Isaiah*, so we bring a word unto you. That which ruines you, is your carnal confidence;

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Ye are presumptuous as this People, and crier, *The Temple of the Lord, the Work of the Lord, &c.* as if these would save you: Know therefore, that all these will never cover you in the Day of Wrath; Know there is a necessity to make Peace with God, and your Righteousness must exceed the Righteousness of a Profession and External Priviledges and Duties, or else ye shall be as far from the Kingdom of Heaven, as *Sodom and Gomorrah*. We speak of Rulers Sins, that ye may Mourn for them, lest ye be Judged with them; If ye do not Mourn for them in Secret, know that they are your Sins; Ye are Companions with them: Many fret, grudge, and cry out against Oppression, but who weeps in Secret? Who prays and deprecates God's Wrath, lest it come upon them? And while it is so; The Oppression of Rulers, becomes the Sin of the oppressed themselves.

Hear the Word of the Lord] It were a suitable preparation for any Word that is spoken, to make it take impression, if it were looked on *as the Word of the Lord, and Law of our God*. And truly no Man can hear aright, unless he hear it so. Why doth not this Word of the Lord return with more Fruit? Why doth not Men Tremble or Rejoyce at it? Certainly because it is not received as God's Word: There is a practical Heresie in our Hearts, which rather may be called Atheism; We do not believe the Scriptures. I do not say, Men call it in Question, but I say, ye believe them not. It is one thing to believe with the Heart, another thing not to doubt of it: Ye doubt not of it, not because ye do indeed believe it, but because ye do not at all consider it. It is one thing to confess with the Mouth, and another thing to believe with the Heart; For ye confess the Scriptures to be God's Word, not because ye believe them, but because ye have received such a Tradition from your Fathers, have heard it from the Womb unquestioned. Oh that this were engraven on your Heart, that these Commands, these Curses, these Promises are
Divine

Divine Truths, the Words and the Oath of the Holy One. If every Word of Truth came stamped with His Authority, and were received in the Name of God Himself, what influence would it have on the Spirits and the Practices of Men? This would be a great Reformer, would Reform more in a Month, than Church and State hath done these many Years. Why are Rulers and People not Converted and Healed for all that is spoken? Here it is, *Who believes our Report*: Who believes that our Report is thy own Testimony, O Lord? When Ministers Threaten you in God's Name, if His Authority were stamped on the Threatning, if Men did seriously apprehend it were God's own Voice, would they not Tremble? When the Gospel and the joyful sound comes forth, if ye apprehended that same Authority upon it, which ye who are Convinced, believes in the Law, would ye not be Comforted? Finally, I may say, it is this Point of Atheism, of Inconsideration and Brutishness that destroys the Multitude, makes all Means Ineffectual to them, and retards the Progress of Christians. Men do not consider that this Word is the Word of the Eternal and True and Faithful God, and that not one jot of it will fail. Here is a Point of Reformation I would put you to; If ye mind indeed to Reform, let this enter into your Hearts, and sink down; that the Law and Gospel is the Word of God, and resolve to come and hear Preachings so, as the Voice of *Jesus Christ the True and Faithful Witness*: If ye do not take it so now, yet God will Judge you so at the end. *He that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that hears not you, hears not me.* If ye thought ye had to do with God every Sabbath, would ye come so carelessly, and be so stupid and inconsiderate before the Judge of all the Earth? But ye will find in the end, that it was God whom ye knew not.

S E R M O N

Isa. i. 11
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S E R M O N IX.

Iſa. i. 11. To what purpoſe is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto Me, ſaith the Lord? &c.

THIS is the Word he calls them to hear, and a ſtrange Word. *Iſaiah* asks, What means your Sacrifices? God will not have them. I think the People would ſay in their own Hearts, What means the Prophet? What would the Lord be at? Do we any thing but what He Commanded us? Is He angry at us for obeying Him? What means this Word? Is he not repealing the Statute and Ordinance he had made in *Iſrael*? If he had reproved us for Breach of Commands, for Omiſſion and Neglect of Sacrifices, we would have taken with it; But what means this Reproof for Well-doing? The Lord is a hard Maſter, if we neglect Sacrifices, and offer up the worſt of the Flock, he is angry; If we have a care of them, and offer them punctually, and keep appointed Days precisely, he is angry: What ſhall we do to pleaſe Him? I think many of you are put to as great a Non-plus, when your Prayers and Repentance and Faſting is quarrelled: Do ye not ſay in your Hearts, We know not what to do? Miniſters are angry at us if we Pray not, and our Praying they cry out againſt; They command us to Repent and Faſt, and yet ſay, That God will abhor both theſe. This is a Myſtery, and we ſhall endeavour to unfold it to you from the Word. It concerns us to know how God is pleaſed with our Publick Services and Faſtings: For the moſt part of People have no more Religion. Ye all, I know, deſire to know what True Religion is: Conſult the Scriptures, and ſearch them, for there ye ſhall find Eternal Life. We frame to our ſelf a wrong Pattern and Copy of it,

it, and so we Judge our selves wrong. Our narrow Spirits do not take in the Latitude of the Scriptures Religion, but taking in one part, it excludes another, and thinks God rigid if it be not taken off our hand so. But I pray consider these Three Things, which seem to make up the Good Old Way, the Religion of the Old and New Testament. *First*, Religion takes in all the Commands, it is universal, *Hath respect to all the Commandments*, Psal. 119. 6. It carries the Two Tables in both Hands, the First Table in the Right Hand, and the Second in the Left. These are so entirely conjoynd, that if ye receive not both, ye cannot receive any truly. *Secondly*, It takes in all the Man, his Soul and Spirit, as well as his Body: Nay, it principally includes that which is principal in the Man, *his Soul and Spirit, his Mind and Affections*. If ye divide these, ye have not a Man present but a Body: And what fellowship can Bodies have with him who is a Spirit? If ye divide these among themselves, ye have not a Spirit indeed present: If the Mind be not present, surely the Heart cannot, but if the Mind be, and the Heart away, Religion is not Religion, but some empty Speculation; The Mind cannot serve but by the Heart: Where the Heart is, there a Man is reckoned to be. *Thirdly*, It takes in Jesus Christ as all, and excludes altogether a Man's self. *He worships God in the Spirit, but in Jesus Christ, and hath no confidence in himself, or the Flesh*, Philip. 3. 3, 8. It includes the Soul and Spirit, and all the Commands, but it denies them all, and embraces Jesus Christ by Faith, as the only Object of glorying into, and trusting into. All a Man's self becomes dross in this Consideration. Now the first of these is drawn from the last, therefore it appears first; I say, an endeavour in walking in every thing Commanded, of conforming our way to the present Rule and Pattern, is a Stream flowing from the pure Heart within: A Man's Soul and Affections must once be purified,

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or it send out such Streams in Conversation. And from whence doth that pure Heart come? Is it the Fountain and Original? No certainly; *The Heart is desperately wicked above all things*, and how will it cleanse it self? But this purity proceeds from another Fountain, from Faith in Jesus Christ: And it is this, that lies nearest the uncreated Fountain, Christ Himself, it is the most immediat Conduit, the Mouth of the Fountain, or the Bucket to draw out of the deep Wells of Salvation: All these are conjoyned in this order, 1 Tim. i. 5. *The end of the Command is Love*: Ye know Love is said else-where to be the fulfilling of the Law: And when we say Love, we mean all Duties to God and Man, which Love ought immediatly to principle. Now this Love proceeds from a pure Heart, cleansed and sanctified, which pure Heart proceeds from Faith unfeigned. So then, we must go up in our searching from external obedience all alongst, till we arrive at the inward Fountain of Christ dwelling in us by Faith: And then have ye found True Religion indeed. Now ye may think possibly, we have used too much Circumlocution: What is all this to the present purpose? Yes, very much. Ye shall find the Lord rejecting this Peoples Publick Worship and Solemn Ordinances, upon these Three Grounds, either they did not joyn with them the observation of weightier Commands, or they did not worship him in them with their Spirits, had not Souls present; or they knew not the end and use for which God had appointed these Sacrifices and Ceremonies, they did not see to the end of all, which was Jesus Christ.

First then, I say, the People was much in External Sacrifices and Ceremonies, Commanded of God, but they were ignorant of the end of His Commands, and of the use of them: Ye know in themselves they had no goodness, but only in relation to such an end as He pleased they should lead to: But they stayed upon the Ceremony and

Shadow, and were not led to use it as a Means for such an end; And so though they fancied that they obeyed, and pleased God, yet really they wholly perverted his meaning and intention in the Command: Therefore doth the Lord plead with them in this place for their Sacrificing, as if it had been Murther. They used to object His Commands. What, says the Lord, did I command these things? Who required them? Meaning certainly, who required them for such an end, to take away your Sin? who required them but as a Shadow of the Substance to come? Who required them but as signs of that Lamb and Sacrifice to be offered up in the fulness of time? And for as much as ye pass over all these, and think to please me with the External Ceremony, was that ever my intent or meaning? Certainly ye have fancied a new Law of your own, I never gave such a Law. Therefore it is said, Psal. 50. 13. God pleads after this manner, *Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats?* &c. And Micah 6. 7. *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl?* He who hath no pleasure in sinful Men, what pleasure can He have in Beasts? Therefore, it was to signify to them (who thought God would be pleased with them for their offering,) that He could not endure them, it was worse to him to offer him such a recompence, than if they had done none at all; He is only Well-pleased in His Well-beloved Son; And when they separate a Lamb, or a Bullock from the Well-beloved, what was it to Him more *nor a Dogs Neck, or Swines Flesh?* It was his Creature as these are, and no more, *Isa. 66. 3.* Now that they looked never beyond the Ceremonies, it is evident, because they boasted in them, they used to find out these as a remedy of their Sins, and a mean to pacifie God's Wrath, *Micah 6. 6.* Paul bears witness of it, *2 Cor. 13. 14.* Moses had a Vail of Ceremonies over his Face, and the Children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that Mystery Christ Jesus,

Jesus, but their Minds were blinded, and is so to this Day in the reading of the Scriptures. And this Vail of hardness of Heart shall be done away when Christ returns them again. Now, I say, it is just so with us, there was never a People liker other, nor we are like the *Jews*: We have many External Ordinances, Preaching, Hearing, Baptism, Communion, Reading, Singing, Praying in Publick, Extraordinary Solemnities of Fasting and Thanksgiving, Works of Discipline and Government, Publick Reproof to Sinners, Confessions and Absolutions. What would ye think if we should change the Terms of Sacrifices and New Moons, and speak all this to you? To what purpose is the multitude of your Fasts and Feasts, of your Preachings and Communion, of your Praying in Secret, and in your Families, of Conference and Prayer with others, of running to and fro to hear Preaching, to partake of the Lord's Table? I am full of them, I delight not in them: When ye come here on the Sabbath, who required at your Hand to tread my Courts? Come no more to hear the Word, run no more after Communion, seek no more Baptism to your Children, call no more Solemn Assemblies, it is all Iniquity. Oh say ye, that is a strange Preaching indeed, must we Pray no more? Hear no more? Sing no more? Did not God command these? Why do ye discharge them? We do not mean so, that these should not be, but they should be in another way: All these want the Soul and Life of them, which is Jesus Christ in them. Do ye not think your selves Religious, because ye frequent these? The multitude of the People think that these please God and pacifice His Wrath: Ye have no other Thing in your Mind but these, If ye can attain any Sorrow or Grief for Sin, or any Tears to signify it, presently you absolve your selves for your Repentance; The scandalous who appear in publick, thinks the paying of a penalty to the Judge, and bowing the Knee before the Congregation

gregation, satisfies God. Ye miss nothing when ye have these: I speak to the Professors of Religion also, who pretend to more Knowledge than others, when ye have gone about so many Duties, ye are well satisfied, if ye get liberty in them; If ye can satisfy your self, ye doubt not of God's satisfaction; And if ye do not satisfy your selves in your Duties, ye cannot believe his Satisfaction; Ye get the Ordinance, and misses nothing. Now, I say, in all this ye do not reach to the end of this Ministry *Jesus Christ*, ye do not stedfastly behold Him, to empty your selves in His Bosom, to turn over all the unrighteousness of your Holy Things upon Him who bears it; That which pleaseth you, is not *He in whom the Father is Well pleased*, but the measure of your own Duty. O! the Establishing of our own Righteousness is the ruin of the Visible Church: This is the grand Idol, and all Sacrifice to it. Know therefore, that the most part of your Performances are Abomination and Iniquity, because ye have so much confidence in them, and puts them not upon Christ as filthy Rags, or do not cover them with His Righteousness, as well as your Wickedness. I know ye will say, That ye are not satisfied with them, and that is still the matter of your Exercise. Well, I affirm in the Lord's Name from that ground, that ye have confidence in them, for if your diffidence and inquietness arise from it, your Confidence and Peace must come from it also. Is there any almost that maintains Faith, except when their own Conditions please them well? And that Faith I may call no Faith, at least not pure and cleanly entire Faith. As for the multitude of you, you must know this, that God is not pleased with your Prayers and Fasting, and Hearing, &c. Because ye have such an Esteem of them, because ye can settle your selves against all Threatnings, and never once remember of *Jesus Christ*, or consider the end of His coming into the World: Because ye find no Necessity of Pardon for your Prayers and Righteousness, but stretches the Garment

ment of these over the uncleanness of your Practices; What delight hath the Lord in them, when they are put in His Sons place? Will he not be jealous that his Sons Glory be not given to another?

In the *Second Place*, The Lord rejects their Performances, because there was nothing but a meer Shadow of Service, and no Worshipping of God in the Spirit. Ye know what Christ saith, *God is a Spirit, and he that worships Him, must do it in Spirit and Truth*, John 4. 24. It is the Heart and Soul that God delights into; *My Son, give me thy Heart*, for if thou give not thy Heart, I care for nothing else: The Heart is the whole Man; What a Man's Affection is, that he is. Light is not so, it brings not the Man alongs with it: Christ Jesus hath given Himself for us, and He requires that we offer our selves to Him; If we offer a Body to frequent His House, our Feet to tread in His Courts, our Ears to hear His Word, what cares He for it, as long as the Soul doth not offer it self up in Prayer, or Hearing. And this was the Sin of this People, Isa. 29. 13. *They draw near with the Lips, and their Heart is far from the Lord*. Now, are not we their Children, and have succeeded to this? Is there any thing almost in our Publick Services, but what is publick? Is there any thing but what is seem of Men? Ye come to hear, ye sit and hear, and is there any more? The most part have their Minds wandering, no thoughts present: for your thoughts are removed about your Barns and Corns, or some Business in your Head; And if any have their Thoughts present, yet where are Affections? Which are the Soul and Spirit of Religion, without which, it is no true Fire, but Wild-fire, if it be not both burning and shining. Are ye Serious in these Ordinances? Or rather, are ye not more Serious in any thing beside? And now especially when God's Providence calls you to earnest Thoughts, when it cries to all Men to enter into Consideration of their own ways. I pray you, is there any Soul-affliction

on in your Fasts even for a Day? Is there any real Grief or Token of it? Not a Fast in Scripture without weeping; We have kept many, and have never advanced so far. Shall the Lord then be pacified? Will not His Soul abhorre them? How shall they appease Him for your other Provocations, when they are as Oyl to the Flame, to increase His Indignation? The most part of Christians are guilty here: We come to the Ordinances, as it were, to discharge a Custom, and perform a Ceremony, that we may have it to say to our Conscience, that it is done, and there is no more Intent and Purpose. We do not seek to have Soul-communion with God: We come to Sermon to hear some New Thing, or New Truth, or New Fashion of it. To learn a Notional Experience of Cases; But alas! this is not the great Purpose and Use of these Things; It is to have some New Sense of these Things we know: We know already, but we should come to get the Truth more received in our Love, to Serve God in our Spirits, and to return to Him our selves in a Sacrifice acceptable. This is the greater half, if not the whole of Religion, Love to Jesus Christ, who loved us, and living to Him, because He died for us, and living to Him, because we love Him. Now all our Ordinances and Duties, should be Channels to carry our Love to Him, and occasions of venting our Affections.

Thirdly, The Lord rejected this Peoples Services, because they were exact and punctual in them, and neglected other Parts of His Commandments; And this is clearly expressed here, *I will not hear your Prayers*, though there be many of them: Why? *Your Hands are full of Blood*. Ye come to Worship Me, and Pray to Me; and yet there are many Abominations in your Conversation, which you continue in, and do not challenge in your selves. Ye have unclean Hands, and shall your Prayer be accepted, which should come up with pure Hands? They took His Covenant in their Mouth, and offered many Sacrifices, but what have ye to do with these things.

things (saith the Lord) since ye hate to be reformed, since ye hate Personal-reformation of your Lives, and in your Families? What have ye to do to profess to be my People? *Psal. 50. 16, 17.* The Lord requires an Universality, if ye would prove Sincerity: If ye have respect to any of His Commands, as His Commands, then will ye respect all. If ye be partial, and choose one Duty that is easie and refuse another harder; ye will come to the Church and hear, but ye will not Pray at home; Ye will Fast in Publick, but not in Private: Then (says the Lord) ye do not at all obey Me, but your own Humour; ye do not at all Fast unto Me, but unto your selves; As much as your Interest lies in a Duty, so much are ye carried to it: And I take this to be the Reason, why many are so eager in pursuing Publick Ordinances, following Communion, and Conferences with God's People, ready to Pray in publick rather than alone: If ye would follow them into their Secret Chamber, how much indifferency is there? how great infrequency? how little fervency? Well (says the Lord) did ye Pray to Me when ye Prayed among others? No, ye Prayed either to your selves, or the Company, or both. Did ye seek Me in a Communion? No, (saith the Lord) ye sought not me, but your selves: If ye sought Me indeed with others, ye would be as earnest if not more, to seek Me alone, *Zech. 7. 8.* And again, the Lord especially requires the weightier Matters of the Law to be considered; As it was among the *Jews*, their Ceremonies were commanded, and so good, but they were not so much good in themselves, as because they were Means appointed for another end and use. But the Moral Law was binding in it self, and good in it self, without relation to another thing. And therefore Christ lays this heavy Charge to the *Pharisees*, *Ye tithe Mint and Anise*, *Matth. 23. 23.* *Wo unto you, for ye neglect the weightier matters of the Law, Judgement, Mercy, and Faith, these ye ought to have done, and not left the other undone.* Are there not many who

would think it a great Fault, to stay away from the Church on the Sabbath or Week-day, and yet will not stick to Swear, to Drink often? *We unto you, for ye strain at a Gnat, and swallow a Camel.* Therefore are the Prophets full of these Expostulations: The People seemed to make Conscience of Ceremonies and External Ordinances, but they did not order their Conversation aright; They did not execute Judgement, and relieve the Oppressed, did not walk Soberly, did not Mortify Sinful Lusts, &c. Alas! we deceive our selves with the noise of a Covenant, and a Cause of God, we cry it up, as an Antidot against all Evils, use it as a Charm, even as the Jews did their Temple; and in the mean time, we do not care how we walk before God, or with our Neighbours: Well, (thus saith the Lord) *Trust ye not in lying words,* Jer. 7. 4, 5, 6. If Drunkenness reign among you, if Filthiness, Swearing, Oppression, Cruelty reign among you, your Covenant is but a lie, all your Professions are but lying words, and shall never keep you in your Inheritances and Dwellings. The Lord tells you what He requires of you, *Is it not to do justly, and walk Humbly with God?* Micah 6. 7. This is that which the Grace of God Teaches, *To deny ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly towards your God, your Neighbour, and your self,* Titus 2. 11, 12. And this he prefers to your Publick Ordinances, your Fasting, Covenanting, Preaching, and such like. *Is not this to know Me?* (saith the Lord) Jer. 22. 15, 16. You think you know God, when you can Discourse well of Religion, and entertain Conferences of Practicall Cases; You think it is Knowledge to understand Preachings and Scripture. But thus saith the Lord, *To do justly to all Men, to walk humbly towards God, to walk soberly in your selves,* is more real Knowledge of God, than all the Volumes of Doctors contain, or the Heads of Professors. Is this Knowledge of God, to have a long flourishing Discourse, containing much of Religion in it? Alas! no;
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to do Justly, to Oppress none, to Pray more in Secret, to walk Humbly and Soberly, this is to know the Lord; Practice is real Knowledge indeed, it argues, that what a Man knows, he receives in Love, that the Truth hath a deep impression on the Heart, that the Light shines into the Heart, to inflame it. What is Knowledge before God? As much as Principles, Affection and Action, as much as hath Influence on your Conversations: If you do not, and love not what you know, is that to know the Lord? Shall not your Knowledge be a Testimony against your Practice, and no more?

S E R M O N X.

Isa. 1. 16. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine Eyes; cease to do Evil, &c.

IF we would have a sum of pure and undefiled Religion, here it is set down in opposition to this Peoples shadow of Religion, that consisted in External Ordinances and Rites. We think that God should be as well-pleased with our Service as we our selves; therefore, we choose His Commands, which our Humour hath no particular antipathy against, and refuse others. But the Lord will not be so served; As He will not share with the World and divide the Soul and Service of Man with Creatures, so as Mammon should get part, and he his part. No, if we choose the one, we must refuse the other, for so will He not suffer His Word and Commands to be divided; There must be some Universality in respect of the Gospel and the Law, and a conjunction of these two, or we cannot please Him.

If Religion do not include the Gospel, we are yet upon the old Covenant of Works, according to

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which, none can be justified; If it do not include the Law in the Hands of a Mediator, then *we turn the Grace of God into wantonness*. If it shut out Jesus Christ, and have no use of Him, how can either we or our Performances stand or be accepted before His Holy Eyes? If it exclude the Law that Christ came to establish, how can He be pleased with our Religion? Both of these offer an indignity to the Son of God. The Sum then of Christian Religion, is Believing and Sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, that is the Root and Fountain; this is the Fruit and Stream: Justification of our Persons, and Sanctification of our Lives and Hearts. *This is pure Religion, and undefiled*. And therefore *Isaiah* says, *Wash ye, make you clean*. Cleanse in the only true Fountain of Christ's Blood. It is not your purifications of the Law, your many washings with Water, and Hyssop, *It is not the Blood of Bulls and Goats can purge your Consciences from dead works*: they do but purifie your Flesh, but cannot wash your Souls worse defiled. This Blood of Jesus Christ is that clean Water that He must sprinkle on you; if you would be clean. If you take any other Water, any other Righteousness but His, and wash thy self therewith, suppose it be Snow-water that washeth cleanest, thy most exact Conversation; yet *He will plunge thee in the Mire, till thy own Clothes abhor thee*, Job 9. 30, 31. Now when ye have washed your Persons, ye need not *fare to wash your Feet*, (says Christ) your daily Conversation, reform it in the vertue of that Blood, for *we are not called to Uncleaness, but unto Holiness*. And therefore, *Put away the Evil of your doings*, &c. God hath put away the Guilt of your doings by Justification, now put ye away the Evil of your doings by Sanctification, &c. And if ye would know what Sanctification is? *Cease to do Evil*; do no return to the old puddle to wallow in it. Ye that are cleansed by this Blood, O! think how unbecoming it is to you, to defile your selves again with these things ye are cleansed from: But

now,

now, *Learn to do well*: ye are given up to Christ, ye must be His Disciples, and He will Teach you: *Learn of Me* (says Christ) you need no other Law almost but His Example; He is a visible and speaking Law, yet *seek Judgement*. As ye ought to look on my Example; so especially ponder that Word and Rule of Practice and Behaviour that I have left behind Me, and given out as the Law-giver of the Redeemed: Have I Redeemed you? And should not I be the Redeemed and Ransomed ones King? Is there any Society in the World wants a Law, Order and Government? Neither must ye who are delivered from Bondage, enfranchised, and made free indeed. Now ye should of all Men most live by a Law. And when ye know that Rule, then apply it to your several Vocations and Callings: let the Magistrate Act according to it, and every Man according to it: Religion consists not in a General Notion, but condescends to our Particular Practice, to Reform it. You see then what we would press upon your Consciences. It is True Religion that we would have you perswaded unto. All Men have some kind of Religion, even Heathens who worship Idols; but the True Religion respects the True and Living God. Now what is it to worship the True and Living God? What is the Service of Him, that may be called Religion indeed? Should we be the prescribers of it? No certainly, He must carve solely in that, or else it cannot please Him. Therefore, *To the Law, and to the Testimony*: if ye speak not according to this, and worship not according to this Word of God, it is because there is no Light into you. Ye may have a Religion before Men pure and undefiled, but if it be not so before God and the Father, I pray you to what purpose is it? I am sure, it is all lost labour, nay, it is labour with loss, instead of gain. O that ye were perswaded to look and search the Scriptures! Think ye to have Eternal Life out of them? And think ye to have Eternal Life by them, who do not labour to know the way of it set down there? Every one of you have a

different

different model of Religion according to your Fancies and Breedings, according as your Lusts will suffer you: The Rule that the most part walk by is the course and example of the World. Is not this Darknes, and gross Darknes? Others model their Duties according to their Ability, they will do all they can do with Ease, and without Troubling themselves, and they think God may be Well-pleased with that. I pray you consider and hear the Word of the Lord, and Law of your God; hath He set down here the Rule and perfect Patern of True Religion, and will ye never so much own it, as to examine yours according to it? The Scriptures are the Touch-stone; If you would not have a counterfeit Religion deceiving you in the end when ye have trusted to it, I pray you try it by the Word of God. Ob! that this Principle were once sunk into your Hearts, I may not walk at random, if I please my self, and satisfie my own Will, if that be not also God's Will, I shall have neither Gain nor Comfort of it, His Will is manifested in His Word, I will search and find what God hath required of me; for if I be not certain of His Will, I may be doing all my Days, and sweating out my Life, and yet lose my Pains and Oyl. I say, this Word of the Lord that *Isaiah* calls to the People to hear, *ver. 10.* will at length judge you. Your Religion will be tried in the Day of Accounts according to it, not according to your Rules and Methods ye have prescribed unto your selves. Now if ye in the meantime shall judge your selves according to another Rule, and absolve your selves, and in the end God shall judge you according to this Word, and condemn you, were ye not Fools in neglecting this Word?

The whole Will of God concerning your Duty may be summed up in two; *John* hath one of them, *1 John 3. 23.* And this is His Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of His Son *Jesus Christ*, and love one another, as He gave us Commandments. And *Paul* hath another to the *Thessalonians*, *1 Thess.*

4. 3. *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctifications.* And these two make up this Text, so that it unites both Gospel and Law. The Commandment of the Law comes forth, and it is found that we have broken, and are guilty, that we cannot answer for one of a thousand; the Law entering makes Sin abound, our inability, yea, impossibility of obedience is more discovered: Well then, the Gospel proclaims the Lord Jesus Christ for the Saviour of Sinners, and commands us under pain of Damnation to Believe in Him, to cast our Souls on Him, as one able to Save, as one who hath obeyed the Law for us; so that this Command of Believing in Christ is answerable to all the Breaches of the Law, and tends to make them up in Christ. When He proclaimed the Law on Mount Sinai with Terror, that which ye hear exprest is not His First Commandment, which ye are in the first instance to obey, for all these we have broken; but it hath a Gospel-command in its Bosom, it leads to Jesus Christ; and if ye could read the Mind of God in it, ye would resolve all these commands which condemn you, and curse you, into one command of believing in the Son, that ye may be Saved from that Condemnation: And if ye obey this command, which is His last command, and most peremptory, then are the Breaches of all the rest made up, the intent of all the rest is fulfilled, though not in your obedience, yet in Christs, which is better than ours. Believing in Christ presents God with a perfect Righteousness, with an obedience even to the Death of the Cross. When a Sinner hears the Holy and Spiritual Sense of the Law, and sees it in the Light of God's Holiness, O how vile must he appear to himself, and how must he abhor himself? What Original Pollution, what Actual Pollution, what a Fountain within, what Uncleaness in Streams without will discover it self? Now when the most part of Men get any sight of this, presently they fall a washing and cleansing themselves, or hiding their filthiness. And what Water

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take they? Their own Tears or Sorrows, their own Resolutions, their own Reformations. But alas! we are still more plunged in our own filthiness, that is still marked before Him, because all that is as foul as that we would have washen away. What Garment do Men take to hide themselves ordinarily? Is it not their own righteousness? Is it not a Shirt of some Duty that is spread over Transgressions? Do not Men think their Sins hid, if they can Mourn and Pray for a Time? Their Consciences are eased by reflection upon this. But alas! thine Iniquity is still marked; Shall filthiness hide filthiness? *Thy Righteousness is as a vile Garment, as a menstruous Cloth,* Isa. 64. 6. As well as thine unrighteousness, how then shall it cover thy nakedness? Seeing it is so then, what is the Lords mind concerning our cleansing? Seeing stretched out Hands, and many Prayers will not do it, what shall I do? The Lord hath shewed thee what thou shalt do, and that is, that thou do nothing in relation to that end, that thou shouldst undertake to wash away the least Spot by all thy Repentance; yet must thou wash and make clean, and the Water is brought new unto you, even the *Blood of Jesus Christ, that cleanseth from all Sin*: wash in this Blood, and ye shall be clean. And what is it to wash in this Blood? It is to believe in Christ Jesus, to lay hold on the All-sufficient Vertue of it, to trust our Souls to it, as a sufficient Ransom for all our Sins; to spread the Covering of Christ His Righteousness over all our rightnesses and unrighteousness, as having both alike need to be hid from His Holy Eyes. *Jesus Christ came by Water, and by Blood,* 1 John 5. 6. By *Water* to Sanctifie, and by *Blood* to Justifie: By the power and cleansing vertue of the Holy Ghost to take away Sin in the Being of it, and by the vertue of His Blood to take away Sin in the Guilt and Condemnation of it.

Now I conceive he presses a Two-fold Exercise upon them in this washing, and both have relation

to the Blood of Jesus Christ, to wit, *Repentance* and *Faith*. If they be not all one, yet they are in this Point inseparably conjoined. Repentance waters and saps the roots of Believing, which otherwise would dry up. Therefore in stead of outward Forms and Ceremonies of Religion, he presseth them to inward Sorrow and Contrition of Heart for Sin, that they might present an acceptable Sacrifice to God, a *Contrite Heart*. This is more pleasing than many specious Duties of Men without, *Psal.* 50. 7, &c. But when I press upon you Repentance, do not conceive that we would have it preparatory to Faith, that ye should sit down and mourn for your Sins for a Time, till your Hearts be so far humbled, and then ye might come as prepared and fitted to Jesus Christ. This is the mistake of many Christians, which keeps them from solid settling. We find it ordinary, Souls making Scruples and Objections against coming to Jesus Christ, because of want of such Preparations, of measures of Humiliation and Contrition, which they prescribe to themselves, or do behold in others: and so they sit down and apply themselves to such a work, applies their Consciences to the Law and Curse; and they find in stead of Softning, Hardness, in stead of Contrition of Spirit, more Dulness and Security; At least they cannot get Satisfaction to themselves in that they seek, and thus they hang their Head over their Impenitent Hearts, and lament not so much that Repentance is not, as that they cannot find it in themselves. Alas! there are many Diseases in this one Malady. If it were imbowelled unto you, ye would not believe that such a way were so contradictory to the Gospel: For *First*, Ye who are so, have this Principle in your Hearts which is the Foundation of it. I cannot come to Christ so unclean, I must be a little washed, ere I come, the most gross Uncleaness and Hardness of my Heart must be taken away, and so I shall be accepted: Alas! what Derogation is this to the Blessed Saviour? What Absurdity is it, I am too unclean to come.

come to the Fountain, I must be a little purged before I come to this Fountain that cleanseeth from all Sin? I pray you, why was the Fountain opened, was it not for Sin and Uncleaness? And this thou says by Interpretation, If I were so and so humbled, then I might come, and be worthy to come; when the want of such a measure debars thee as unworthy, Doth not the having of it in thy Estimation make thee worthy? And so ye come with a Present in your Hand to Jesus Christ, with a Price and Reward to Him who gives freely. Again, thou deniest Christ to be the only Fountain of all Grace, and so it is most dishonourable to Him. If thou would have Repentance before thou come to Him, where shall thou have it? Will thou find it in thy Heart, which is desperately wicked? Will thou seek it of God, and not seek it in the Mediator Jesus Christ? God out of a Mediator will not hear thee. In a word, there is both extream Sin, and extream Folly in this way: great Sin, because it contradicts the Tenour of the Gospel, it dishonours the Lord Jesus, the exalted Prince, as if He were not the Fountain of all Grace, it is contrary both to the Freedom of His Grace, and to the Fullness of it also. It is great Folly, for thou leaves the *Living Fountain*, and goes seeking Water in a *Wilderness*; thou leaves the *Garden*, where all Herbs grow, and wanders abroad to the wild *Mountains*; And because thou canst not find what thou seeks, thou sits down and weeps beside it. Repentance is in Christ, and no Repentance so pleasing to God as the Mournings and Relentings of a Pardoned Sinner: but thou seeks it far from Him, yea, refuseth Him for want of that which thou may have by choosing Him. Therefore we declare this unto you, that whatever ye be, whatever ye want, if ye think ye stand in need of Jesus Christ, embrace Him: If ye be exceeding vile in your own Eyes, and cannot get Repentance as ye would, to cleanse your selves, here is the Fountain opened, and ready to wash into. Yet this we must tell you, that no Sinner

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ner can Believe but he that Repents, not because Repentance is required as a Preparation to give a Man a warrant and right to Believe; I know no ground of Faith but our Necessity, and the Lord's Promise and Command unto us, but because no Soul can truly flee into Jesus Christ to escape Sins guilt, but he that desires to be delivered from Sin it self: And therefore the most part of you fancy a Faith which you have not, because there is no possibility that Men will come out of themselves, till they be pressed out by discovered Sin and Misery within: Your woulds and wishes after Christ and Salvation, that many of you have, are not the real Exercises of your Souls fleeing unto Him for Salvation. If ye did indeed turn into Jesus Christ, your Hearts would turn the back upon Sin, and these Sins ye seek remission of. Now all the desire that many Men have of Christ, is this, I would fain have His Salvation, if I might keep my Sin: I wou'd gladly be delivered from the guilt of Sin, if He would let me keep still the Sin. But will Christ make any such bargain?

If this Blood only wash from Sin, Oh, how many ly in their Sins, and wallow in their filthiness? *There is a Generation clean in their own Eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness,* Prov. 30. 12. Oh that ye believed this! If ye be not now washed, Eternity shall find you unclean; And wo to the Soul that enters Eternity with all the Pollution of its Sins: Can such a Soul enter into the High and Holy Place, the clean City? No certainly, it must be without among the Dogs and Swine, it must be kept in Darkness for ever. It is then of great importance, that ye be washen from your filthiness. Now I ask you, Is it so or not? Are ye made clean, and washen from the guilt of your Sins? Every one of you almost will say so, and think so, and yet says the Scripture, *There is a Generation pure in their own Eyes, and yet are not washed.* Is there a Generation such? Is there any such? Oh then, think it's possible you may be mistaken in the opinion

opinion of your own cleanness: Do any conceive themselves Pardoned, and yet are not so? think it is possible you may have deceived your selves, especially since ye have never examined it: But are there so many so, a whole Generation, the most part of Men? Then as you love your Souls, try; for it is certain, that most part of you must be deceived. Is there a Generation in the Visible Church not washed, and yet everyone thinks himself clean? Then certainly, the most part are in a great delusion, will ye then once examine whether or not ye be deluded with them? It shall be your peace to know it, while it may be amended. But how comes it to pass, that so many hearing of the Gospel, and lying near this Fountain, are not cleansed? I think certainly, because they will not have a through cleansing, they get none at all: All Men would love Christ's Blood well to Pardon Sin, but who will accept of the Water to Sanctifie them from Sin? but Christ came with both. Shall this Blood be spent upon numbers of you, who have no respect to it; but would still wallow in your filthiness? Would ye have God pardoning these Sins, ye never thoroughly resolve to quitte? But how is it, that so many Men are clean in their own Eyes, and yet not washed? I think indeed, the Reason of it is, they make a kind of washing, which they apprehend sufficient, and yet knows not the True Fountain. We find Men taking much Sope and Nitre, when Convinced of Sin, or Charged with it, and thereupon, soon absolving themselves. If ye ask their grounds, they will tell you, They repent and are sorry for it, they purpose to make amends, and they think amendment a good compensation for the past wrong; They will (it may be) vow to drink no more for a Year after they have been drunk; They will confess their Sin in publick, and all this they do without having any thought of Jesus Christ, or the end of His coming, and can absolve themselves from such grounds, tho' in the mean time, Christ come not so much as in their Mind. And therefore, are they

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they not really washed; All thy Righteousness is unclean before God, and thy Repentances defile thee, and yet because of some such Duties thou deceivest thy self, and art clean in thine own Eyes: These have some beauty in thy Eyes, and thou puts them between thy Filthiness and thy Eye; and so conceives that thou art clean. I think a Reason also, why many Men are clean in their own Eyes, and conceive that God hath Pardoned their Sin, is because they have forgotten it; It is not recent in their Memory, and makes no present wound in their Conscience. And therefore, they apprehend God such as themselves, they think He hath forgotten it also. But Oh! how terrible shall it be, when God brings to remembrance, and sets our Sins in order before us? Ye think God cares not for your Sins, that He forgives them because He is silent at them, *Psal. 50. 21.* But the Lord shall one Day set them before thee, and thou shalt know they were still marked before Him.

Ye who have washen in this Blood, ye may rejoyce; for it shall make you clean every whit. Your Iniquities that so defiled you, shall not be found. O! the precious Vertue of that Blood that can purge away a Soul's Spots: All the Art of Men and Angels could not reach this. This Redemption and Cleansing was precious, and would have ceased for ever. But this Blood is the Ransom, this Blood cleanseth, and so perfectly, that it shall not appear, not only to Mens Eyes, but also God's piercing Eye. Sinners quite your own Righteousness, why defile ye your selves more? When your Eyes are opened, ye will find it so, here is washing, apply your selves to this Fountain; And if ye do indeed so, if ye expect cleansing from Jesus Christ, I pray you return not to the puddle. Ye are not washen from Sin, to Sin more, and defile your self more: If ye think ye have liberty to do so, ye have no part in this Blood.

S E R M O N XI.

Isa. 1. 16. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine Eyes; cease to do evil, &c.*

THERE are Two Evils in Sin, one is the Nature of it, another the Fruit and sad Effect of it. In it self it is filchiness, and contrare to God's Holiness, an abasing of the Immortal Soul, a Spot in the Face of the Lord of the Creatures, that hath far debased him under them all: Tho' it be so unnatural to us, yet it is now in our Fallen Estate become (as it were) natural, so that Men agree with it, as if it were sunk and drunk into the very Soul of Man. The other is the guilt and desert of punishment and obligation to it. All Men hate this, but they cannot hold it off: They eat the Tree and Fruit of Death, they must eat Death also: They must have the Wages of Sin, who have wrought for it. Now the Gospel hath found a Remedy for lost Man in Jesus Christ; He comes in the Gospel with a Two-fold Blessing, a Two-fold Vertue, a Pardoning Vertue, and a Sanctifying Vertue, *Water and Blood*, 1 John 5. 6. He comes to forgive Sin, and to subdue Sin; To remove the guilt of it, and then the self of it. God's appointment had inseparably joined them; And *Christ came not to dissolve the Law, but to establish it.* If He had taken away the Punishment, and left the Sin in its Being, He had weakened the Law and the Prophets. That conjunction of Sin and Wrath, which is both by Divine appointment, and suitable also unto their own Natures must stand, that Divine Justice may be intire. And therefore, He that comes to Redeem us from the Curse of the Law, hath also this Commission, to Redeem from Sin and all Transgressions

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of the Law, Rom. 11. 26. and Gal. 3. 13. He that turns away the Wrath of God from Men, turns also Ungodliness from them which provoked His Wrath; And so He is a compleat Redeemer, and a compleat Redeemer He had not been otherways. If He had removed Wrath only, and left us under the Bondage of Sin, it had not been half Redemption, *He that commits Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* But this is perfect Freedom and Liberty, to be made free from Sin, for it was Sin that subjected us to Wrath, and so was the first Tyrant, and the greatest. The Gospel then comes with a joyful sound unto you, but many of you mistake it, and apprehends it to be a Doctrine of Liberty and Peace, and that unto Sin; But if it were so, it were no joyful sound. If there were proclaimed a liberty to all Men to do as they list, no punishment, no wrath to be feared, I would think that Doctrine no glad news, it were but the perpetuating of the bondage of a reasonable Soul. But this is glad news, a delivery and freedom proclaimed in the Gospel, but what? Not unto Sin, but from Sin, and this is to be free indeed. We ought more to Jesus Christ for this, than for Redemption from Wrath, because Sin is a greater Evil than Wrath; Yea, Wrath were not so, if Sin were not. Therefore he exhorts to wash, and wash so, that they may make clean: Take Jesus Christ for Justification and Sanctification, employ both the Water and the Blood, that He hath come with. But, because all Men pretend a willingness to have Christ their Saviour, and their Sins pardoned through His Blood, who, notwithstanding hate to be Reformed, and would seek no more of Christ: Therefore, he branches out that part of the Exhortation, in several particulars: All Men have a general liking of Remission of Sins, but renouncing of it, is to many a hard Doctrine, they would be glad that God put their Evils out of His Sight, by passing them by, and forgetting them; But they will not be at the pains of putting away their Evils from His Sight: And therefore, the Gospel which

which comprehends these two united, is not really received by many, who pretend to be followers of it. *This is His Command, that ye believe.* Some pretend to obey this, and yet hath no regard of that other part of His Will, even their Sanctification. And therefore, their Faith is Dead, it is a Fancy. If ye did indeed believe and receive Christ for pardon of Sin, it were not possible, but your Souls would be engaged and constrained, to endeavour to walk in all Well-pleasing: But it is an evident token of one that is not washed from his Sin, and believes not in Christ, if he conceive within his Heart, a greater latitude and liberty, to walk after the Flesh, and be imboldned to continue in Sin, because of His Grace and Mercy. And yet such are the most part of you. Upon what ground do ye delay Repentance? Upon what presumption do ye continue in your Sins, and puts over the serious study of Holiness, till a more fit time? Is it not from an apprehension of the Grace and Mercy of God, that ye think, ye may return any time, and be accepted, and so ye may in the mean time, take as much pleasure in Sin as ye can, seeing ye may get leave also for God's Mercy? I pray you consider, that you have never apprehended God's Mercy aright, ye are yet in your Sins, and certainly as yet, are not washed from them.

Put away the Evil, &c.] When the Spirit Convinces a Soul, he Convinces a Man, not only of evil doings, but of the evil of his doings; Not only of Sin, but of the sinfulness of Sin: And not only of those Actions which are in themselves sinful, but also of the Iniquity of Holy Things. I think no Man will come to wash in Christ's Blood, till this be discovered. If he see much wickedness, many evil doings, yet he will labour to wash away these by his own Tears and Repentance, and well-doing. As long as he hath any good Actions, as Prayers, Fasting, and such like, he will cover his evil doings by them; He will spread the Skirts of such righteousness over his uncleanness: and when

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when he hath hid it from his own Eyes, he apprehends that he hath hid it from God's also: He will wash his bloody hands with many Prayers, and thinks they may be clean enough: We see blasphemers of God's Name, use to joyn a prayer for forgiveness with their Oath and Curse, and they never trouble themselves more: Oh! what mocking of God is this? Now as long as it is thus, there is no employment for the Son of God's Blood, they can do their own turn: Men will not come to Christ, because it is the best way, if they see any else beside. None will come till he see it is the only way. None can wash in Christ, except they wash all. If ye have any thing that needs not washing, His Blood is not for you: His Righteousness is not known, when ye establish all, or a part of your own. I fear the most part of you have no employment for Christ; Ye have extream need of Him, but ye know it not; For there are many things which ye will not number among your Sins, your Prayers, your Hearing, Reading, Singing, Publick and Private Worship, giving Alms, &c. How many of you were never Convinced of any Sin in these? Do ye not conceive God is Well-pleased with you for them? Your Conscience hath Convinced you, it may be, of gross Sin, as Drunkenness, Filthiness, Swearing, &c. But ye are not Convinced for your Well-doing; Ye find not a Necessity of a Mediator for these; I think many of you never confessed any such thing, except in a general Notion. Alas! how Ignorant are Men of themselves? We are unclean, how can any thing we do cleanse us? Are not we unclean, and do not our hands touch our own works? Shall not then our own uncleanness defile our good Actions, more than they can cleanse us? Hag. 2. 13. The ignorance of this, makes Men go about to build up their old ruined righteousness, and still seeking something in themselves, to make up wants in themselves. Always, when the Light of God hath discovered you to your selves, so that ye can turn your Eye no where,

where, but uncleanness fills it, tho' your Conversation be blameless in the World, so as Men can challenge nothing, yet ye have found within and without, nothing but Matter of Mourning; I say, this is an Evidence that the Spirit hath shined and enlightened thy darkness. Now when thou hast fled unto Jesus Christ for a Covering to thy Righteousness, as well as Unrighteousness, it remains that thou now *put away the evil of thy doings*; Put not away thy doings, but the evil of them. We challenge your Prayers, Services, and Publick Duties, even as the Prophet did; We declare unto you, that God is as evil pleased with them, as your Drunkenness, Whoring, Intemperance, &c. The most part of you, are no more acceptable when ye come to the Church, than when ye go to the Tavern, your Praying and Cursing is almost all one. What shall we do then, say ye? Shall we Pray no more, and Hear no more? No, say I, put not away your Prayers and Ordinances, *but put away the evil of them, from before His Sight*. Rather multiply your doings, but destroy the Evil and Iniquity of your doings. And there is one Evil or two above all, that makes them hateful to Him; Ye trust too much in them: Here is the Iniquity, *The Idol of Jealousie set up*, ye make your doings your righteousness, and in that Notion, they are abomination. There is nothing makes your worship of God so hateful, as this, ye think so much of it, and justifies your self by it: And then God knows what it is, that ye so magnifie, and makes the ground of your claim to Salvation; it is even an empty Ceremony, a Shadow without Substance; a Body without a Soul; You speak and look and hear, you exercise some outward Senses, but no inward Affections: And what should that be to Him, who is a Spirit?

They did not observe the Iniquity of their Holy Things: and therefore are they marked by Him, *They are in His Sight*: They did not see so many Faults in their Prayers and Services; They wondered why God did chide them so much; But God marks what

what we miss, He remembers when we forget: We cover our selves with a Vail of External Duties, and think to hide all the Rottenness of our Hearts, but it will not be hid from Him, before whom, Hell hath no Covering, *All Hearts are open and naked before Him.* Your Secret Sins are in the Sight of His Countenance. Men hear you Pray, see you present at Worship, they know no more, at least they see no more. Nay, but the Formality of thy Worship, the Wandrings of thy Mind, are in His Sight. And O! how excellent a Rule of walking were this, to do all in His Sight and Presence. Oh that ye were perswaded in your Hearts of His All-seeing, All-searching Eye, and All-knowing Mind! Would ye not be more solicitous and anxious anent the Frame of your Hearts, than the Liberty of your Speech, or External gesture? Oh how would Men retire within themselves, to fashion their Spirits before this All-searching, and All-knowing Spirit! If ye do not observe the Evils of your Hearts and Ways, they are in His Sight, and this will spoil all acceptance of the good of them: If ye observe the Evils of your Well-doing, and bring these also to the Fountain, to wash them, and be about this earnest endeavour of perfecting Holiness, of perfecting Well-doings in the Power and Fear of God; then certainly, He will not set your Sins in the Light of His Countenance, the good of your way shall come before Him, and the evil of it Christ shall take away.

Cease to do Evil, &c.] These are the two Legs a Christian walks on; if he want any of them, he is lame and cannot go equally, ceasing from evil, and doing good. Nay, they are so united, that the one cannot subsist without the other. If a Man do not cease from Evil and his former Lusts, he cannot do well, or persevere in Holiness. There are many different Dispositions, and Conditions of Men; There are generally one of two. Some have a Kind of abstinence from many gross Sins, and are called Civil Honest Men, they can abide an Inquest and

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Censure of all their Neighbours, they can say no ill of them; But alas! there is as little good to be said: He Drinks not, Swears not, Whores not, Steals not. Nay, but what doth he well? Alas! the World cannot tell what he doth, for he Prays not in Secret, nor in his Family, he is void of some Offences towards Men, but there are many Duties called to, towards both God and Men, he is a stranger to. He Oppresses not the Poor, nay, but he is not Charitable either, to give to them; He Defrauds no Man, but whom Helps he by his Means? Again, there are others, they will boast of some things done; they Pray, they keep the Church well, they do many good turns, and yet for all that, they do not cease to do Evil; They were Drunkards, so they are; They can Swear for all their Prayers, are given to Contention, to Lying, to Filthiness, &c. Now, I say, neither of these Religions is pure and undefiled. Religion is a through and intire change: It is like a New Creation, that must destroy the first Subject, to get place for that which is to come; It is a putting off old Garments, to put on new; The putting off an old form and engraven Image, to make place for a new-engraving. Men do not put a Seal above a Seal, but deface the old, and so put on the new; Men do not put new Clothes upon the old, but put the old off, and so they have place for the new: Religion must have a naked Man; Godliness is a new Suit, that will not go on upon so many Lusts; No, no, it is more meet and more conformed unto the inwards of the Soul than so: The cold must go out as the heat comes in: Many Men do not change their Garments, but mends them, puts some new pieces into them; They retain their old Lusts, their Heart idols, and they will add unto these a patch of some External Obedience; But alas! is this Godliness? Hypocrisie will be content of a mixture, Sin is the Harlot, whose Heart could endure to see the Child parted. It can give God a part, to get leave to brook the most part; Sin will give God liberty to take some

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some of the Outward-man, if it keep the Heart and Soul. But God will not reckon on these terms, He will have all the Man, or nothing, for He is the Righteous Owner. True Godliness cannot mix so, but false and counterfeit may do it well. Other Men again, possibly undresses themselves of some Practices, but they put on no New clothing; They reform some Passages for fear of Censure, or Shame, or such like; They are sound, it may be, blameless, either because so Educated, or their Disposition is against particular gross Sins. But they are not clothed upon with Holiness and Well-doing, and so they are but naked and bare in God's Sight, not beautiful; They have swept their House, and some Devil put out, or kept out, but because the good Spirit enters not, ordinarily seven worse enter again into such Men.

There is a great moment of persuasion in this order of the Exhortation, *Wash ye, and then, put away the evil of your doings, and cease to do Evil.* Do not continue in your former customs. It is strange, how contrary our Hearts are to God; We use to turn Grace unto Wantonness; We use to take more liberty to Sin, when we conceive we are pardoned: But I do not know any more strong and constraining persuasion to forsake Sin, than the Consideration of the forgiving of it might yield. Oh what an inducement and grand Argument, to renouncing of Evils, is the Consideration of the remission of them? This is even that ye are now called unto, who have fled to Jesus to escape Wrath: What should ye be taken up with, in all the World but this, to live to Him henceforth, who died for us? To forsake our own old way, and that from the constraining Principle of Love to Him, 2 Cor. 13. 14, 15. Oh! that ye would enforce your own hearts with such a Thought, when there are any Solicitations to Sin, to former Lusts. Should I that am dead to Sin, live any longer therein? Rom. 6. Should I who am washed from such Pollutions, return again to the Pollutions of the World? Should I

again defile my self, who am cleansed by so Precious Blood, and forget Him that washed me? Should I return with the Dog to the vomit, and with the Sow to the Puddle? God forbid. I pray you consider, if you be Christians indeed, give a proof of it. What hath Jesus Christ done for you? He hath given Himself, His own Precious Blood a Ransom for us, will ye not give up your selves to Him? Will not ye give Him your Sins and Lusts, which are not your self, but Enemies to your self? Will not ye put away these ills, that He came in this World to destroy? Art thou a Christian, and are there yet so many Sins, and works of the Devil reigning in thee, and set up in God's Sight? What an inconsistency is this? If thou be His follower, thou must put these away. Give them a Bill of Divorcement, never to turn again. Many a Man parts with his Sin, because it leaves him, he puts it not away; Temptation goes, and occasion goes away, but the root of it abides within him. Many Men have particular jarrs with their Corruptions, but they reconcile again, as differences between Married Persons; They do not arise to hate their Sin in its sinful Nature. But if thou hate it, then put it away. And who would not hate it, that Christ so hated, that He came to destroy it? 1 John 3. 5. What a great indignity must it be to the Gospel, to make that the ground of living in Sin, which is pressed in it, as the grand perswasion to forsake it? Seeing we are washed from the guilt of it, Oh let us not love to keep the stain and filth of it. Why are we washen? Was it not Christ's great intendment and purpose, to purifie to Himself a Holy People? We are washen from the guilt of our Sins, and is it to defile again? Is it not rather to keep our selves henceforth clean, that we may be presented holy and unblameable in His Sight? That we may seek to be as like Heaven as may be. But who ceases to do these Evils, that he says are Pardoned? Who puts away the evils of these doings, the guilt whereof, he thinks God hath put away? Could ye find in
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your Hearts to entertain those Evils so familiarly, to pour out your Souls unto them, if that Peace of God were indeed spoken unto you? Would not the reflex of His Love prove more constraining on your Hearts? Were it possible, that if ye did indeed consider, that your Lusts cost Christ a dear price, to shed His Blood, that your Pleasures made His Soul heavy to Death, and that He hath laid down His Life to Ransom you from Hell. Were it possible, I say, that ye would live still in these Lusts, and choose these Pleasures of Sin, which were so bitter to our Lord Jesus? I beseech you, be not deceived, if ye love the Puddle still, that ye cannot live out of it, do not say that ye are washed? Ye may have washen your selves with Sope and Nitre, but the Blood of Christ hath not cleansed: For if that Blood sprinkled your Conscience once, to give you an Answer to all Challenges, it could not but send forth Streams to purifie the Heart, and so the whole Man. The Blood and Water might be joyned, the Justifying Saviour, and the Sanctifying Spirit; For both these are in this Gospel washing, 1 Cor. 6. 11. & John 5. 6. *This is He that came by Water and Blood, even Jesus Christ, not by Water only, but by Water and Blood.* Not by Water only, but by Blood also, and I say, not by Blood only, but by Water also. The very purpose of forgiveness, is not to lay a Foundation for more Sin, but that Men may Sin no more, but break off their Sins. It is indeed impossible for a Man to amend his ways, till he be pardoned, for his Sin stands betwixt him and God. God is a Consuming-fire, the guilt of it hinders all meeting of the Soul with God, at least, all influence from him; But when an open Door is made in Christ, that Men may come and Treat with God, notwithstanding of Rebellions, and have the Curse relaxed: O! now he may go about his Duty comfortably. Am I escaped from Hell, why should I any more walk in the way to it? And now he hath the Spirit given for the asking. There are some Cessations from Sin, that are not real forsakings of

it, and ceasings from it: You know Men will abstain from Eating for a Season, that they may be made ripe for it another time: Some do not cease from Sin, but delays it only, they put it not away, but put it off only for another time, till a fitter occasion and opportunity. And this is so far from ceasing from it, that it is rather an deliberate choice of it, and Election of conveniency for it: There may be some pure and simple ceasings from Sin, meer abstinence, or rather meer absence of Sin for a Season, that is not ceasing from doing evil. The Christian's ceasing hath much Action in it: It is such a ceasing from doing Evil, that it is a putting away of Evil; It hath the Soul and Spirit joyned in that Cessation. Sin requires violence to put it out, where it hath haunted, it is an intruding Guest, and an usurping Guest: It comes in first as a Supplicant and Beggar, prays for a little Lodging for a Night, and promises to be gone, the Temptation speaks but for a little time, even the present time, for a little one, it seeks but little at first, least it be denied; but if once it be received into the Soul, it presently becomes Master, and can command its own time, and its abode: Then ye will not so easily put it out, as ye could hold it out, for it is now joyned with that wicked, desperate party within you, the Heart, and these united Forces are too strong for you. According as a Lust is one with a Man's Heart, or hath nearer connexion with his Heart and Soul, it is the worse to put away: For will ye drive a Man from himself, it is the cutting off a right hand, or plucking out of a right eye. To make a Man cease from such Evils, it requires that a stronger power be within him, than is in the World. Men may cease for a time, for want of occasions, or temptations to Sin; when there is no Active Principle in them, restraining or keeping their Soul from such Sins as appears after, when no sooner occasion is offered, but they run as the Horse to his course, or the Stone falleth downward, they conceive Fire as easily as dry Stubble: That

is not Christian ceasing, which is that which the Soul Argues it self to, from Grounds of the Gospel. Should I who am dead to Sin, live any longer therein? This is a Principle of Cessation, and this is True Liberty, when the Soul can abstain from present Temptations, upon such grounds and persuasions of the Gospel, then it is really above it self, and above the World, then hath it that True Victory. Many Men cease only from Sin, because Sin ceases from them, they have not left it, but it hath left them. The Old Man thinks himself a Changed Man, because he wallows not in the Lusts of the Flesh, as in his Youth. But alas! no thanks to him, for that he hath not ceased from his Lusts: but Temptations to him, or power and ability in him to follow them hath ceased, there is no change in his Spirit within, for he can talk of his former Sins with pleasure, he continues in other evils as bad, but more suitable to his Age. In a word, he is so inwardly, that if he were in his Body, and occasions offering as before, he would be just the same. Some again, cease from some Evils, from some Principles, but alas! they are no Christian Principles: What restrains the multitude of Civillians from gross scandals? Is it any thing but affectation of a good Name and Report in the World? Is it not fear of Reproach or Censure? Is it not because possibly they have no particular inclination to such Evils? And yet there are many other evils of the Heart as evil, tho' more subtle, that they please themselves in, as Pride, Covetousness, Malice, Envy, Ambition, &c. What shall all your Abstinence be accounted of, when it is not Love to Jesus Christ, or Hatred of Sin that principles it? It is not the outward abstinence that will commend you. Such it is, as the Principles of it are. And these only are the True Christian Principles of Mortification, Love of Jesus Christ, *which constrain Men to live no more to themselves*, but to be new Creatures, 1 Cor. 5. 14, 15. And hatred of Sin in its Nature as Sin: A Christian should have a mortal hatred at it, as his mortal Enemy. It is not Christianity,

to abstain from some *Fleshly Lusts*, if ye consider them not as your *Souls Enemies*, 1 *Peter* 2. 11. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil*, *Psal.* 97. 10. These are chained together: *David's* hatred was a *Soul-hatred*, an *abhorrence*, *Psal.* 119. 163. *I hate and abhorre lying*, it is like the natural *Antipathies*, that are among *Creatures*. The *Soul* hates not only the *Person* of it, but the *Nature* of it also. Men often hate *Sin*, only as it is *circumstantial*, but *Christian* hatred is a hatred of the *Nature*, like the deadly *feuds*, which are *enmities* against the *kind* and *name*. *I will put Enmity between thy Seed*, &c. *It is a perfect hatred*, *Psal.* 139. 22. And so it cannot endure any *Sin*, because all is contrary to *God's Holiness*, and offensive to *His Spirit*. I would think it easier to forsake all *Evil*, and cease from doing any *Evil*, I mean presumptuously, with a willing *Mind* and *Endeavour*, than indeed to forsake one; for as long as ye entertain so many *Lusts* like it, they shall make way for it. It were easier to keep the whole *Commandments* in an *Evangelical Sense*, than indeed to keep any one, for all of them help another, and subsist they cannot one without another, so that ye take a foolish course, who go about particular *Reformations*. Ye scandalous *Sinners*, profess that ye will amend the particular *Fault* ye are *Guilty* of, and in the meantime, ye take no heed to your *Souls* and *Lives*; Therefore, it shall be either in vain, or not acceptable: How pleasant a *Life* would *Christians* have, if they would indeed be persuaded to be altogether *Christians*? The halving of it neither pleaseth *God* nor delights you; It keeps you but in continual torment between *God* and *Baal*: your own *Lusts* usurp over you, and that of *Christ* in you challenges the *Supremacy*, so ye are as *Men* under two *Masters*, each striving for the place, and were it not better to be under one settled *Government*? If there be any *Tenderness* of *God* in your *Hearts*, or *Light* in your *Consciences*, they cannot but testify against your *Lusts*, these strange *Lords*; Your *Lusts* again, they drive you on against your *Conscience*;

Conscience; Thus ye are divided and tormented betwixt two, your own Conscience and Affections. You have thus the pain of Religion, and know not the true pleasure of it: You are marred in the pleasures of Sin, Conscience and the Love of God is a Worm to eat that Gourd, it is Gall and Vinegar mixed in with them. Were it not more wisdom, to be either one thing or another? If ye will have the pleasures of Sin for a Season, take them wholly, and renounce God, and see if your Heart can endure that. If your Heart cannot condescend to that, I pray you renounce them wholly, and ye shall find more exquisit and sure pleasures in Godliness, at His Right Hand. O what a noble entertainment hath the Soul in God! The Peace and Joy of the Holy Ghost is a Kingdom indeed.

S E R M O N · XII.

Isa. 26. 3. Thou shalt keep him in Perfect Peace, whose Mind is stayed on Thee, because he Trusteth in Thee.

ALL Men love to have Priviledges above others. Every one is upon the design and search after some Well-being, since *Adam* lost that which was True Happiness: We all agree upon the General Notion of it, but presently Men divide in the following of Particulars. Here all Men united in seeking after some good, something to satisfy their Souls, and satiate their Desires. Nay, but they scatter presently in the Prosecution of it, because, according to every Man's Fancy and Corrupt Humour, they attribute that good unto divers things; And when they meet with disappointment, they change their opinion of that, but are made no wiser, for they turn from one to another of that same kind, in which their Imagination hath supposed blessedness to be:

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And therefore, they will return to that which they first loathed and rejected. Is there then no such Thing in the World as Blessedness? Is it not to be found among Men? Are all Mens unsatiable Desires in vain? Is a Creature made up and composed of desires, to keep it in continual Torment and Vexation of Spirit? No certainly, it is, and it is found by some; All the World strive about it, but the Man only who Trusts and Believes in God, he it is who carries it away from them, who hath this privilege beyond the World. And why do so many miss it? Because they do not see nor suspect that it is Blessedness indeed which he enjoys: But on the contrary, their corrupted Imaginations represent Godliness, and a Godly Man's Self-indigency and dependence on God, as the greatest Misery and Shame. The Godly Man hides not his Blessedness from the World. No, he proclaims it when he hath found it; He would that all enjoyed it with him. And if there were no more to declare, that it doth not consist in Worldly Things, this might suffice; they are not communicable to many, without the prejudice and loss of every one. But none will believe his report, of his own Estate.

If ye would consider, here is that which Men toil for, compass Sea and Land for, here it is, *Near thee, in thy Mouth*: It is not in Heaven, that thou should say, *How shall I ascend to it?* It is not in Hell below, that thou shouldest say, *Who shall descend?* It is not in the ends of the Earth; No, it is near thee, *in thy Mouth*: It is not beyond the Sea, but it is near, *in thy Mouth, even the Word of Faith*, which Christ Preached, Rom. 10. 6, 7, 8. And what says that Word? *Believe with thy Heart, and thou shalt be Saved; Trust in God, and depend on Him, and ye shall have Peace*, and that perfect Peace: And this Peace shall be kept by God Himself. *Blessed then is the Man that Trusts in the Lord*, Psal 40. 4. Ye make a long Journey in vain, ye spend your Labour and Money in vain, all the pains might be saved, it is not where ye seek it; ye travel about

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many Creatures, ye go to many Doors, and enquire for Happiness and Peace, but ye go too far off, ye need not search so many Coasts, it is nearer hand, in this Word of the Gospel, the joyful sound; It is this that proclaims Peace. Peace is a comprehensive word, especially in Scripture. It was the Jews Salutation, *Peace be to you*, meaning Happiness and all Good Things: It is Christ's Salutation, Grace and Peace. Grace is Holiness, Peace is Happiness, and these are either one, or inseparably conjoined as one. This was the Angels Song, *Glory to God, Peace on Earth*, Luke 2. 14. Blessedness was restored, or brought near to be restored, to Miserable Man by Jesus Christ, and upon the apprehension of this, Angels Sing. It was this, Christ came in the World with, and when He went away, He left this Legacy to His Children, *My Peace I leave you*, John 14. 27. We lost Happiness, and all Men are on a vain pursuit of it since, but it is found, and found by one of our Kin, our Lord Jesus, our Elder Brother, He hath found it, or made it, and brought it near us in the Gospel, for the receiving, and whoso receives Him by Faith, and trusting in Him, receives that Privilege, that Peace. He endured much Trouble to gain our Peace, He behoved to undergo Misery, to purchase our Blessedness, and so it is His own, and whoso receives Him, receives it also.

The News of such a Peace might be seasonable in the Time of War and Trouble, if we apprehended our need of it. It is not a Peace from War and Trouble, but a Peace in War and Trouble. *My Peace I leave you, in the World ye shall have Trouble*, John 14. 27. and 16. at the end. What a blessed Message is it, that there is a Peace, and a perfect Peace, attainable in the midst of Wars, Confusions and Calamities of the Times Publick and Personal, a perfect Peace, a compleat Peace, even compleat without the Accession of outward and Worldly Peace, that needs it not, nay, appears most perfect and entire in it self, when it is striped naked of them all. Behold what a privilege the Gospel offers unto you;

you; Ye need not be made Miserable but if you please. This is more than all the World can afford you, there is no Man can promise to himself Immunity from Publick Dangers, or Personal, from many Grievs and Disappointments: But the Gospel bids you reckon up all your Troubles and Miseries that ye can meet with in the World, and yet in such a Case, if ye hearken to Wisdom, there is a Peace that will make you forget that Trouble; *Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace*, Prov. 3. 17. I will undertake to make thee Blessed, says *Wisdom, the Father's Wisdom*. When all the World hath given thee over for Miserable, when thou hast spent thy Substance on the Physicians, and in vain, come to me, I can heal that desperate Disease by a word, *I creat Peace*, when natural Causes have given it over, I creat it of nothing, *I will keep you in perfect Peace*.

You have then here, Three Things of special concernment, in these Times and all Times, a Blessedness, a perfect Peace attainable, the way of it, and the Fountain of it: The Fountain of it, the Preserver of it, is *God Himself*; The way to attain it, is *Trusting in God, and staying on Him*. This sweetness of Peace, is in God the Tree of Life, Faith puts to its Hand, and plucks the Fruit of the Tree; Hope and Dependence on God, is a kind of tasting of that Fruit; and eating of it, and then followeth this perfect Peace, as the delightful relish and sweetness that the Soul finds in God, upon tasting how Gracious He is. *God Himself is the Life of our Souls, the Fountain of Living Waters, the Life and Light of Men*. Faith and Trusting in God, draws out of this Fountain, out of this deep Well of Salvation, and staying on God drinks of it, till the Soul be refreshed with Peace and Tranquillity, such as passeth Natural Understanding. Christ Jesus is the Tree of Life, that grows in the Garden of God, trusting in Him by Faith, implants a Soul in Him, roots a Soul in Him, by vertue of which Union it springs up and grows into a Living Branch, by staying and depending upon

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upon Him, we live by Him, and hence springs this blessed and sweet Fruit of Peace of Soul and Conscience, which grows upon the confidence of the Soul placed in God, as the Stalk by which it is united to the Tree. Trusting and staying upon God, is the Soul's casting its Anchor upon Him, in the midst of the Waves and Storms of Sin, Wrath and Trouble. The poor beaten Sinner casts an Anchor within the Vail, on that sure ground of immutable Promises in Jesus Christ. And then it rests and quiets it self at that Anchor, enjoys Peace in the midst of the Storm, there is a great calm, it is not moved, or not greatly moved, as if it were a fair Day: *David* fleeth unto God as his Refuge, Anchors upon the Name of the Lord, *Psal*. 62. 1, 2. And so he enjoys a perfect Calm and Tranquillity, *I shall not be moved*, because he is united to the Rock, he is tyed to the firm Foundation Jesus Christ, and no Storm can dissolve this Union; not because of the strength of that Rope of Faith, it is but a weak Cord, if Omnipotency did not compass it about also; And so *we are kept by the Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation*. The poor wearied Traveller, the Pilgrim sits down under the shadow of a Rock, and this Peace is his Rest under it. Faith lays him down, and Peace is his Rest and Sleep. Faith in Jesus Christ is a motion towards Him, as the Soul's proper place and center; and therefore it is called a coming to Him, flying to Him as the City of Refuge: It is the Soul's flight out of it self, and Misery and Sin within, to apprehended Mercy & Grace, & Happiness in Christ. Now Hope is the Conjunction or Union of the Soul with Him, the Soul then staying and resting on Him, as in its proper place; And so it enjoys perfect peace and rest in its place: So that if ye remove it thence, then ye offer violence to it.

These Two Things are of greatest importance to you to know: What this perfect Peace is, and what is the way to attain it? The one is the Priviledge and Dignity, the other is the Duty of a Christian, and these two make him up what he is.

I would

I would think that Man perfectly blessed, who is at peace with Two Things, God and himself. If a Man be at peace with Creatures without him, and be not at Peace with himself, but have War within his own Mind, that Man's Peace is no Peace, let be perfect Peace. *A Man's greatest Enemy is within his own House.* And within indeed, when it is in his Bosom and Soul: When a Man's Conscience is against him, it is worse than a World beside. *Conscientia mille testes*, so, I say, it is *mille hostes*. It is a Thousand Witnesses, and a Thousand Enemies. It were better to endure condemnation of any Judge, of many Judges in the World, than to sustain the Conviction of a Man's own Conscience: *When it accuseth, who shall excuse?* John 8. 9. Rom. 2. 15. *A Merry Spirit* (saith Solomon) *is a continual Feast*; Prov. 15. 15. And what must a Heart be, which hath such a gnawing Worm within it, as an accusing Conscience, to eat it out? This is the Worm of Hell that dies not out, which makes Hell, Hell indeed. This indeed will be a painful Consumption, *a broken Spirit drieth up the Bones*, it will eat up the Marrow of the Spirit and Body, Prov. 17. 22. What infirmity is there which a Man cannot bear? Poverty, Famine, War, Pestilence, Sickness, name what you will, *but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* Prov. 18. 14. And there is Reason for it, for there is none to bear it: A sound and whole Spirit can sustain Infirmities, but when that is wounded, which should bear all the rest, what is behind to bear it? It is a burden to it self: If a Man have Trouble and War in this World, yet there is often escaping from it; A Man may fly from his Enemy, but when thy Enemy is within thee; whither shall thou fly? Thou cannot go from thy self, thou carries about thee thy Enemy, thy Tormentor.

But suppose a Man were at peace within himself, and cried peace, peace to himself, yet if he be not at peace with God, shall his peace be called peace? Shall it not rather be named Supine Security? If a

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(121)
Man be at variance with himself, and his Soul un-
quieted within, there is more Fear than Danger, if
he be at peace with God; It is but a false Alarm,
that shall end well: But if he have Peace in his
own Bosom, and yet no Agreement with God; then
Destructions are certainly coming, his Dream of
peace will have a terrible waking. A Man may
Sleep soundly, and his Enemies round about him,
because he knoweth not of it; but he is in a worse
Estate, nor he that is in great Fear, and his Enemies
either none, or far distant: The one hath present
Danger, and no Fear, the other present Fear, and
no Danger, and which of these think ye best? Sud-
den Destruction awakes the one from Sleep, *Ezek.*
7. 25. Their Fear and Destruction come both at
once, when it is now in vain to Fear, because it is
past Hope, *Prov. i. 27.* Therefore the Lord swears,
that *there is no peace to the wicked, Isa. 48. 22.*
What? Do not they often cry peace to themselves,
and put the evil day far off? No Men are so
without Bands in Life and Death as they, they have
made agreement with Hell and Death, and their own
Consciences; Yet for all that, *Thus saith the Lord,*
There is no peace to the Wicked. If God be against
us, what is the matter who be with us; For He can
make a Man's Friends his Enemies, and He can make
a Man's Enemies to be at peace with him: He
makes peace, and creates trouble, Isa. 45. 7. Men
can but destroy the Body, but He can destroy both
Body and Soul for ever. O what a Potent and Ever-
lasting Enemy is He? There is no escaping from
His All-seeing Eye, and Powerful Hand, *Psal. 139.*
7, 8. A Man may fly from Men, but whither
shall he fly from His Presence? To Heaven? He
is there: To Hell? He is there. The Darknes of
the Night hath been a Covering under which many
have escaped, and been saved in Armies, but Dark-
ness is no Covering to Him, it is all one with
Light; He is near hand every one of us: The Con-
science is within us, but He is within the Consci-
ence; And how much God is above the Creature,

so great and dreadful a Party is He above any Enemy imaginable. Therefore I conclude, that that Man only hath perfect peace, who is at peace with God, and with his own Conscience. If a Man be at peace with God, and not with himself, he wants but a Moments Time of Perfect Peace; for, or it be long, the God of it will speak Peace unto him. But if he be at peace with God and himself, I know not what he wants of the perfect peace, of the *Peace, Peace*: For it is a Man's Mind that makes Peace or War, it is not outward things; but in the midst of Peace, he may be in Trouble, and in the midst of Trouble, in Peace, according as he hath satisfaction and contentment in his own Breast: For what is all the Grace of a Christian? It is Godliness with Contentment: It is not Godliness and Riches, Godliness and Honour, or Pleasure, Godliness and outward Peace. No, no, Contentment compenseth all these, and hath in it eminently, all the gain and advantage of these. A Man in Honour, a Rich Man, having no contentment in it, is really as poor, as ignominious, as the poor and despised Man. If Contentment then be without these things, certainly they cannot be missed; For where Contentment is not with them, it only is missed, and they not considered. Contentment is all the Gain that Men seek in Riches and Honour, and Pleasure; If a Godly Man have that same without them, he then hath all the Gain and Advantage, and wants nothing, but some trouble that ordinarily attends them: Outward Peace cannot add to inward Peace, and so the want of it, cannot diminish.

We must begin at the Original, if we would know rightly this Peace that passeth Knowledge. The Fountain-head is Peace with God; a Stream of this, is Peace of Conscience, and Peace with the Creatures. There is a Peace of Friendship, when Persons were never Enemies, and there is a Peace of Reconciliation, when Parties at Variance are made one. Innocent *Adam* had Peace once with God as a Friend,

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Friend, Angels continue so to this Day; but now there is no such Peace between Men and God, for all are become Enemies to God, and Aliens from the Common wealth of Israel. That Peace was broken by Rebellion against God his Maker, and all the Posterity are born with the same Enmity against God: On our part are Hearts desperately wicked, whose Imaginations is only evil continually: On God's part is Holy and Spotless Justice, that is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity; and therefore, must destroy it or the Sinner. On our part are so many Rebellions, Adam's Actual Transgression, and all our own Sins and Breaches of the Holy Law, as so many Breaches of Peace. On God's part, are so many Curses answerable to the Breaches of the Law: *Cursed is every one that abideth not in every thing, &c.* This Curse is even the Proclamation of Men to be Traitors, and an Intimation of the Righteous Judgement which will come upon them. Adam was in a Covenant of Peace with God, *Do, and thou shalt Live, if not, thou shalt Die.* Adam brake this Covenant, so the Peace is dissolved, and God is no more obliged to give Life, but to execute the pain contained in the Covenant: And in sign and token of this, look how Adam fled from God's Presence, to hide himself when he heard His Voice, it was a poor shift, *for whither should he go from His Presence?* But alas! seeking more Wisdom, he lost that he had, seeking Divine Wisdom, he lost Humane. Now there is no more making up this Peace on such Terms again: We have no Capacity to Treat with God any more. But blessed be His Majesty, who hath found out the way of Agreement and Reconciliation. Oh! that ye were once perswaded of your Enmity against God: Ye are not born Friends, tho' ye be born within the Visible Church. How dreadful a thing is it, to have the most High and Terrible God against you, to cō to you according to your deservings? Ye all know this, we are Enemies to God by Nature, I pray you, is it but a name? Is it not worthy deep Consideration?

sideration? But who considereth this Matter? If ye lose a Friend, ye will be troubled, and the more behoveful your Friend was, the more troubled you will be. If a great and potent Nation proclaimed War against us, we cannot but be sensible of it: But alas! who considereth the great Breach that is between God and all Men, occasioned by the first Man's Transgression and Rebellion? It is one of the degrees of Health, to know the Disease, and I may call it a degree of Peace, a kind of preparation to Peace, to know the Enmity, and not generally to know it, but to ponder it till the Heart be affected with it; To call a Council of all the Faculties and Affections of the Soul, to consider the great imminent danger of Man's Common-wealth. What is it, I pray you, that is the greatest obstruction of Mens making Peace with God, that makes the Breach irreparable, and the wound incurable? It is this, certainly; No Man apprehendeth it aright; We entertain good thoughts of our Friendship with God, or that it is easie to be reconciled. Who seeth such a wide Breach between God and Man, that all the Merits of Angels and Men could not make it up? Who seeth the Price of Redemption so Precious, as it must cease forever, for all that Men and Angels can do? Is not every Man offering God satisfaction, either his Tears, or Sorrow, or Amendment in Time coming, or all of them? Do not Men undertake to pacifie God with External Ordinances, and think it may suffice for their Sins? Certainly ye are Ignorant, of the infinite separation between God and Man, that imagines a Treaty with Him your self, or that ever ye can come in speaking Terms. And therefore is this War and Enmity perpetual; therefore, there is no Peace, when ye cry *Peace, Peace*. When ye have Peace within you, and say that ye have Peace with God; - Yet certainly, *the Lord thy God is against thee, and will not spare thee*, Deut. 32. 19. Many of you bless your selves in your own Hearts; when ye hear the Curse and Threatning of the Law, ye

say,

er? If ye say, God forbid, or all that were true. Well, thus saith the Lord, All these Curses that are written in this Book, shall ly upon thee, and the Lord shall separate thee unto Evil, because ye take not with your Enmity, there can be no Treaty, a Mediator can have no imployment from you.

How shall the Breach of Peace be made up? Since the first Covenant cannot be made up again, where shall the Remedy be found? God is Just and Righteous, Men are Rebellious and Sinful; Can these meet, and the one not be consumed? Will not God be a Consuming-fire, and Men as Stubble before the Lord's Presence? Therefore, there must be a Mediator between them, a Peace-maker, to make of two, one, to take up the difference. And this Mediator must be like both, and yet neither wholly the one, nor the other. He must therefore be God and Man, that He may be a fit Days-man, betwixt God and Man. And this is our Lord *Jesus Christ*. In His Divinity, He comes near to God, in His Humanity, He comes near to Man; In His Person, He is between both, and He is fit to make Peace; And therefore, He is a *Prince of Peace*, Isa. 9. 6. And that He may be a Prince of Peace, He must be both *An Everlasting Father* like God, and a Young Child like unto Man: God to prevail with God, and a Man to engage for Man; And therefore He is called *our Peace*, Eph. 2. 14. Our Lord Jesus Christ enters in a Covenant with the Father, wherein He undertakes to bear our Curse, and the Chastisement of our Peace; He is content to be dealt with as the Rebel, *Upon me, upon me be the Iniquity*, and so there comes an Interruption, as it were, of that blessed Peace He had with the Father, He is content that there should be a Covering of Wrath, spread over the Father's Love, that He should handle the Son as an Enemy; And therefore it is, that Sinners are admitted as Friends, His Obedience takes away our Rebellion; The Cloud of the Lord's displeasure pours down upon Him, that it might be fair Weather to us: The Armies of Curses that were against

against us, encounter Him, and He by being overcome, overcome; By being slain by Justice, Satan and Sin, overcome all those, and killeth the *Enmity on the Cross, making Peace by His Blood*, Col. 2. 14, 15. Eph. 2. 15. And it is this Sacrifice that hath pacified Heaven, the sweet smell of it hath gone above, and made Peace in the High-places.

Here then is the Priviledge of a Believer, to be at Peace with God, to be one with Him: And this indeed is Life Eternal, to be united unto the Fountain of Life, in whose Favour is Life, and whose Loving Kindness is better than Life: Is not this a blessed Estate? Whatever a Man hath done against God, it is all forgiven and forgotten, shall never come in remembrance. Are not Angels blessed, who are Friends with God? Such is the Soul whose Sins are pardoned through Christ, their Sins are as if they never had been; The Soul is not only escaped that Terrible Wrath of God, but being at Peace with God, all the Goodness that is communicable to Creatures, it shall partake of. *That they may be one, as we are one, that they may be perfect in one*, John 17. This Christ prayed for, and this was the end of His Death, to make of two, one; So then, the Glory that Christ is partaker of with the Father, we must be partakers of with Him, and all this, by vertue of that Peace with God by Him. Oh if ye knew what Enmity with God is, how would it indure and make Precious Peace with Him? The one engageth all that is in God, to be against a Man; the other engageth all that is in him, to be for a Man. And is not he then a great One, whether he be a Friend or an Enemy? Is he not the best Friend, and worst Enemy? Who hath most power, yea, all power to employ for whom he will, and against whom he will. What a blessed change is it, to have God, of a Consuming fire, made a Sun, with Healing and Consolation? That the Righteous, Holy and Just God, before whom, no Flesh can stand, should accept so rebellious Sinners, and dwell among

them.

them. He had not only power to destroy, but Law against us also: What a perfect peace is it then, that the Judge becometh a Merciful Father, and the Law of Ordinances is cancelled, and that power employed to keep Salvation to us, and us to Salvation? Ye who have made Peace and Atonement through Christ's Blood, rejoyce in the Hope of the Glory of God; There wants nothing to make you compleatly blessed, but the clear and perfect Sight, and Knowledge of your Estate before God.

Now when this Peace, which is made up in Heaven is intimated unto the Conscience, then all the Tempests and Clouds of it evanish, and this is the Peace of Believing, which is the Soul's resting and quieting it self upon the believed Favour of God. There may be a great Calm above, *Good-will in God towards Men*, and yet great Tempests in this lower Region, *no Peace on Earth*. There is a Peace of Conscience, which is a Disease of Conscience, a benumbedness of Conscience, or a sleep of Conscience, when Men walk in the Imagination of their own Hearts, and flatter themselves in their own Eyes, will not trouble themselves with the apprehension of the Wrath of God, when Souls will not suffer their Sin, or the Curse to enter in. This is that *no peace*, which the Lord speaks often of, it is but a Dream, and when a Man awaketh, alas! what a dreadful sight meets he with first, *sudden Destruction*! Sin enters in the Conscience, and the Law, the strength of Sin, and so that peace endeth in an eternal disquietness. But what is the Reason, that notwithstanding of God's Justice and Mens Sins, so many are not afraid of Him, so many pass the Time, without Fear of Wrath and Hell? Is it not because they have taken hold of His Strength, and made Peace with Him? No indeed, but because they know not the Power of His Anger, to Fear Him according to His Wrath: Who will spend one Hour in the Examination of his own ways, in searching out Sins, in counting his Debt, till he find it paid?

payment? No, Men intertain the Thoughts of Sin, and Hell and Wrath, as if it were Coals in their Bosom, they shake them out, they like and love any diversion from them. Oh! Ignorance maketh much peace, I would say, Security, which is so much worse than Fear, because it is so far from the Remedy, that it knoweth not the Evil and Danger. It is not the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, shining into the Soul, that hath cleared them; but their perpetual darkness that blindeth them. I say then, in the Name of Jesus Christ, that ye never knew the Peace of God, who knew not War with God: Ye know not Love, who have not known Anger. But this is the Soul's True Peace and Tranquillity, when it is once awakened to see its Misery and Danger; How many Clouds overspread it, what Tempests blow, what Waves of Displeasure go over its head? But when that Peace, which is made in the High-places, breaketh thorow the Cloud with a Voice, *Son, be of good comfort, thy Sins be forgiven thee*; when that Voice of the Spirit is uttered, presently at its command the Wind and Waves obey; the Soul is calmed as the Sea after a Storm; It is not only untroubled, but it is peaceable upon solid grounds, because of the Word which speaks Peace in Christ. The peace of the most of you, is such as ye were Born and Educated withall: It is not a created Peace, a spoken Peace, the fruit of the Lips, and so no true Peace. Ye had not your Peace from the Word, but ye brought it to the Word; Ye have no Peace after Trouble, and so it is not the Lord's Peace.

The Christian may have peace, in regard of his own Salvation and Eternal Things, and in regard of all Things that befall in Time: The *First* is, when the Conscience is sprinkled with the Blood of Jesus Christ, and getteth a good answer to all the Challenges and Accusations of Conscience, and of the Law and Justice, *1 Peter 3. 21*. When the Spirit of God shines into the Soul, with a New Light to discover these things that are freely given, *1 Cor.*

12. And this is the Sealing of the Spirit, after believing, *Eph. 1. 13.* When a Soul hath put to its Seal by believing God's Word, and hath acknowledged God's Truth and Faithfulness in His Word, the Spirit Sealeth mutually the Believer's Faith, both by more Holiness, and the knowledge of it. And how great Peace is this, when a Soul can look upon all its Iniquities, when they compass about a Man, and outward Trouble sharpneth and setteth on edge inward Challenges, and yet the Soul will not fear, it hath answers to them all in Christ's Blood, *Psal. 49. 5.* This is a greater word than all the World can say. Many Mens fearfulness proceedeth from ignorance of Sin, their Iniquities were never set in order before them, but if once they compassed them about, and Wrath like a Fiery-wall compasses them about also; so that there were no escaping: Oh! it would be more terrible, than all the Armies of the World; Ye would account little of a Kingdom, ye would exchange it for such a word as *David* hath upon good grounds.

Now, I say again, the Soul that hath thus committed it self to Him as a Faithful keeper, may have peace in all Estates and Conditions: And this peace cometh from that other peace. There is a peace which guards the Heart and Mind, *Philip. 4. 6, 7.* Opposed to Carefulness and Anxiety, and this *Paul* is Exemplar for, *I have learned in every Estate, wherewith to be content, to want and abound, &c.* *verse 11.* The Soul of a Believer, may be in an equal even Tenour and Disposition in all Conditions; It may possess it self in Patience; Impatience and Anxiety, makes a Man not his own Man, he is not himself, he enjoys not himself, he is a burden to himself, and is his own Tormentor. But if Souls were stayed upon God, certainly they would possess themselves, dwell securely within their own Breasts. We may find that the most part of Men, are exposed to all the Floods and Waves of the Times: They move inwardly, as things are troubled outwardly: Every thing addeth moment to their Grief, or Joy: Any

Any Dispensation casteth the Balance, and either weights them down with Discouragement, or lifts them up with Vanity and Lightness of Mind. But the Believer's Priviledge is to be unmoved in the midst of all the Tossings and Confusions of the times, *Psal. 128. 1, 2. Ye would be as Mount Zion, if ye Trusted in God; No Dispensation should enter into the Soul, to cast the Balance upon you; Ye might stand upon your Rock Jesus Christ, and look about the Estates, Persons, Affairs, and Minds of Men, as a troubled Sea, fretting, tossed up and down, and ye stand and not be moved, or not greatly moved.* *Psal. 62. 2. And this is to be wise indeed.* If I would describe a Wise Man, I would say, he is one *Man*, beside him, no Man is one with himself, but various, inconstant, changeable. He is unwise, who is unlike himself, who changeth Persons according to Dispensations: Wisdom is the stability of thy Times, and Faith is Wisdom, it establisheth as *Mount Zion*, so as a Man cometh out still one, in Prosperity not exalted, in Adversity not cast down, in every Estate content: and this is the Man who is blessed indeed. This were Wisdom, to will the same thing, and will the same thing, *Semper idem velle, atque idem velle.* I need not (saith *Seneca*) add that exception, that it be right which you desire, fire, for no one thing can universally and always please, if it be not good and right. So, I say, he were both Wise and Happy, who had but one Grief and one Joy. Should not a Believer's Mind be calm and serene, seeing the True Light hath shined? It should be as the upper World, where no Blasts, no Storms or Clouds are to eclipse the Sun, or cloud it. While our Peace and Tranquillity is borrowed from outward things, certainly it must change; But a Believer's Peace and Tranquillity of Mind having its rise from above, from the unchangeable Word of the Lord, it needeth not to change according to the vicissitudes of Providence. He needeth not to care before hand, because there is one who careth for him; And what needeth both to care? He needeth

either not be disquieted, or troubled after, because it shall
 or life turn about to his good; *All things shall do so*, Rom.
 Mind, 8. 28. He needeth not be Anxious about Future
 in the Events, because he hath all his Burden cast upon ano-
 e time, ther, by Prayer and Supplication: What needeth
 tion, if he then takes needless Burden? Prayer will do that,
 d enter which Care pretends and cannot do, and that with-
 u; Ye out trouble. He needeth not be troubled when things
 nd look are present, for he cannot by his Thought, either
 inds of add or diminish, take away or prevent. There is
 down, one good and necessary thing, that his Heart is up-
 moved, on, and that cannot be taken from him; And there-
 d. If fore, all things else are indifferent, and of small con-
 he is on cernment to him.

Now what wanteth such a Man of Perfect Peace,
 self, but who is Reconciled to God, and at Peace within him-
 life, who self? When Peace guardeth the Heart and Mind
 according self? Within, compasseth it as a Castle or Garison, to hold
 of thy within, compasseth it as a Castle or Garison, to hold
 sheth as out all the vain Alarms of External Things. May
 one, in not all the World be troubled about him? What
 ft down tho' the Floods lift up their Voice, if they come not
 Man who unto the Soul? If he be one and the same in Peace
 will the and Trouble, Prosperity and Adversity, do not la-
 per idem ment him in the one more than the other. It is the
 Seneca Mind that maketh your Condition good or bad. But
 you de yet, I say, the Believer hath likewise Peace with
 d always all the Creatures, which the World hath not, and
 I say, he even in this he is a priviledged Man. *He is in league*
 one Grief, *with the Stones of the Field, and in peace in his Ta-*
 d be calm *bernacle*, Job 5. 23. *All things are his, because he*
 ined? *is Christs, and all are Christs*, who is the possessor of
 Blasts, no Heaven and Earth, at least the Righteous Heir of
 r cloud in both, 1 Cor. 3. 21. The Unbeliever hath no right
 wed from to the Creature; Tho' there be a Cessation for a
 e; But a time, between them and him, yet that is no peace,
 nd having for they will at length be armed against him, they
 ble Word are witnesses already against him, and groan to God
 ording to for the Corruption, that Man's Sin hath subjected
 eth not to them unto. His Table is, it may be, full, yet it is
 careth for a Snare unto him: He getteth ease and quietness out-
 He needeth wardly:

wardly: Nay, but it slayeth the Fool, and destroyeth him. But the Godly Man is at Peace through Christ's Blood, with all Crosses and Comforts; The Sting and Enmity of all Evils is taken away by Christ. Poverty is made a Friend, because Christ was poor. Hunger and Thirst is become a Friend, because Christ was hungry and thirsty: Reproach and Contempt is at peace with him, because Christ was despised: Afflictions and Sorrows are reconciled to him, because Christ was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Griefs. In a word, Death itself is become a Friend, since Christ subdued it, by tasting of it. I may say, the worst things to a Natural Man, are become best Friends to the Believer; The Grave keepeth his Body and Dust in Hope: Death is a better Friend than Life, for it ministers an entry into Glory: It is the Door of Eternal Life, it taketh down the Tabernacle of Mortality, that we may be clothed upon with Immortality. In sum, whatever it be, Christ hath stamped a new quality on it, it cometh through His Hand, and so, if it be not good in it self, yet it is good in the use, and in His appointment; *Rom. 8. 21.* If it be not good; yet it worketh together for our good: It contributeth to our good, because it is in His skilful Hand, who can bring Good out of Evil, Peace out of Trouble. Oh that ye were perswaded to be Christians indeed, to love His Law, and trust in Him, great Peace have all such: This were more to you, nor Peace in the World: Your Peace should be as a River, for abundance and perpetuity, no drought could dry it up; it should run in Time as a large River, and when Time is done, it would embosom it self in Eternity, in that Ocean of Eternal Peace, and Joy which the Saints are drowned in above: Other Mens Peace is but like a Brook that dries up in Summer.

S E R M O N XIII.

Isa. 26. 3. Thou shalt keep him in Perfect Peace, whose Mind is stayed on Thee, because he Trusteth in Thee.

CH R I S T hath left us His Peace, as the great and comprehensive Legacy, *My Peace I leave you*, John 14. 27. And this was not Peace in the World that He enjoyed, you know what His Life was, a continual Warfare; but a Peace above the World, that passeth understanding, *In the World you shall have Trouble, but in Me you shall have Peace*, saith Christ, a Peace that shall make Trouble no Trouble: You must lay your accounts to have such a Life, as the Forerunner had; But withall, as He hath left us His Trouble, so hath He left us His Peace; The Trouble will have an end, but the Joy can no Man take from you: We have this sure Promise to rest upon, in behalf of the Church, *Peace shall be on Israel*; A Peace that the World knoweth not, and so cannot assault it, or take it away. Oh! that you would hearken to this Word, *That you would trust in the Lord, and stay upon your God, then should your Peace be as a River*, Isa. 48. 18. There is nothing more desired in Time of Trouble, than Peace; but all Peace is not better than War. Some necessary War is better, than evil grounded Peace. The Kingdoms have been long in Pain, labouring to bring forth a safe and Well-grounded Peace. But alas! we have been in Pain and brought forth Wind, when we looked for Peace, no good came; and for Healing, behold Trouble. But how shall we arrive at our desired Haven? Certainly, if Peace be Well-grounded, it must have Truth for its Foundation, and Righteousness for its Companion; *Truth must spring out of the Earth, and Righteousness*

scousness look down from Heaven. This were the compendious way for Publick Peace, if every Man would make his own Peace with God: There are Controversies with God, between King, Nobles and People, and therefore, God Fomenteth the Wars in the Kingdoms; If you would have these ended, make Peace with God in Christ, by fleeing in unto Him, and resting on Him; More Trusting in God would dispatch our Wars; Trusting in the Arm of Flesh continueth them. Always whatever be, Peace or War, here is the Business that more concerns you, your Eternal Peace and Safety; And if ye were more careful of this, to Save your own Souls, you would Help the Publick more. If you could be once perswaded to be Christians indeed, we needed not press many Duties in reference to the Publick, and untill you be once perswaded to Save your selves, by fleeing from the Wrath to come, it is in vain to speak of Publick Duties to you. We do therefore, declare unto you the way of obtaining perfect peace, peace as a River, if you will quite all Self-confidences, flee from your selves as your greatest Enemies, and trust your Souls unto the Promise in Jesus Christ, and lean all your weight on Him, we assure you, your Peace shall run abundantly and perpetually, whoever trusteth in Creatures, in uncertain Riches, in Worldly-peace, in whatsoever thing, beside the only Living and Glorious Lord, we perswade him, that his peace shall fail as a Brook: All things in this World shall deal deceitfully with you, as a Brook which is blackish, by reason of Ice, when time it waxeth warm, it shall vanish; you that looked and waited for Water in it, shall be confounded, because you hoped and are ashamed because of your expectation, *Job 6. 15, &c.* The Summer shall dry up your peace, and what will you do? But if you pour out your Souls on Him, and trust in the Fountain of Living Waters, you shall not be ashamed, for your peace shall be as a River. The Elephant is said to trust, that he can drink out a River, but he is deceived, for he may drink again, it

runs, and shall run for ever. If any thing would essay to take your peace from you, it is a vain attempt, for it runs like a River; it may be shallower and deeper, but it cannot run dry, because of the Living Fountain it proceedeth from. There is no other thing can be made sure, all besides this, is uncertain, and this only is worthy to be made sure; Nothing besides this, can give you Satisfaction.

Are your Hearts asking within you, how shall this Peace be attained? If you desire to know it, consider these Words, *Whose Heart is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee.* It concerneth you much to know well, what this is, that your Eternal Peace depends on.

Trusting in God, is the leaning of the Soul's weight on God, the Soul hath a burden above it, heavy and unsupportable, and this the truster casteth upon God; And so he is a *loadned and weary Man*, whom Christ exhorteth to come to Him, and he shall find ease for his Soul, *Match 11. 28. Prov. 3. 5.* Leaning to our self, and trusting in God are opposed, *Psal 22. 10.* Trusting is expounded, to be *a casting upon God, Psal 25. 1.* It is called, *a lifting up the Soul to Him.* This one thing is included, in the bosom of Trusting and Believing, that a Man hath many Burdens, too heavy for him, which would sink him down: The Believer is such a one as *Jehoshaphat*, *2 Chron. 20. 12.* *O Lord, we have no might against this great Company, neither know we what to do. O Lord, I have an Army of Inquiries against me, a great Company compasseth me about; An Army of Curses, as numerous as mine Iniquities, both are innumerable as the Sand of the Sea, I have no might against them, neither know I what to do: Nay, the Lord is against me, His Wrath is like the roaring of a Lion, what can I do against him? The first beginning of trusting in God, is distrusting our selves: And untill a Man see his Duty and Burden beyond his Strength, his Burden greater than he can bear, you will never persuade him to come to Jesus Christ, and lean on*

Him. We will not preach any such Doctrine, as to discharge any to come to Christ, till they be wearied and loaden; For, when a Man conceiveth that he wanteth that weariedness, whether shall he go to find it? Is there any Fountain, but one Jesus Christ, both of Grace and Preparation; to it, if any such be? But this we Preach unto you, that untill you be wearied and loaden, you will not cast your Burden on Jesus. We need not discharge you to come till you be such, for certainly you will not come. This is the desperate wickedness of our Hearts, that we will never forsake our selves, till we can do no better: Untill Men be as *David*, *I looked on the right hand, and there was none would know me*, Refuge failed me, certainly they will not cry to God: Men will look round about them, before they will look up above them, they will cast the Burden of their Souls upon any thing, upon their own Sorrow and Contrition, upon their Resolution to Amend, upon External Duties and Priviledges, upon Civil Honesty, untill all these succumb under the weight of their Salvation, and then, it may be, they will ask after Him who bare our Grievs. I would not willingly speak of Preparations to Faith, because it putteth Men upon searching something in themselves, upon fashioning their own Hearts, and trimming them to come to Christ; whereas there is nothing can be acceptable to Him, but what cometh from Him. But I think all that Men intend, who speak of Preparations, may be gained this way, by holding out unto Men, the impossibility of coming to Christ, till they be emptied of themselves; Not that the one is a thing going before, to be done by us, but because they are all one, it is one Motion of the Soul to come out of it self, and into Jesus: It is one thing really to distrust our selves, and to trust in Him; And by this means, when the True Nature of Faith it self is holden out, Men might Examine themselves rather by it, whether they have it, nor by the Preparations of it.

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But to come to our Purpose, when the Soul is pressed under Burdens of Sin and Misery, of Duty, and Insufficiency, and Inability to do it, then the Gospel discovereth unto the wearied Soul, a place of reposing and rest. The Lord hath established *Christ Jesus an Ensign to the People*, these who seek unto Him, shall find *His Rest Glorious*, Isa, 11. 10. When there is discovered in us, all Emptiness and Inability, yea, Impossibility to Save our selves, or perform any Duty, then are we led to Jesus Christ, as one who is come with *Grace and Truth, in whom it hath pleased the Father all fulness should dwell*; And the turning of the Soul over upon Him, is trusting in Him. You would not mistake this, trusting in the Lord in its first and most native acting, is not always perswasion of His Good-will and Love in particular; No, the Soul meets first with a general Promise, holding out His Good-will in general, and the Soul closeth with this, a thing both good and true, *as Faithful in it self, and worthy of all acceptation*. This is it that we must first meet with, an All-sufficient Saviour able to Save to the outmost all that come to Him, and the Soul's accepting of that blessed Saviour on the Terms He is offered, this is Believing in Him, and Trusting to Him, as a compleat Saviour.

Now when the Soul hath disburdened it self upon God, and set to its Seal to the Truth of the Promises in the Gospel for Salvation; If the Light of the Spirit shine to discover this unto it, that it hath laid hold on *His Strength, who is able to save to the outmost*, then it becometh perswaded of His Love in Particular, and this is rather the Sealing after Believing, than Believing it self.

When once Men have hazarded their Souls upon His Word, and trusted in Him, then they may trust in Him for all Particulars: *He that hath given His Son for us, will He not with Him give all things?* This therefore, is the continual recourse of a Believer, from discovered emptiness and insufficiency in himself, to travel unto the fulness and strength of

Jesus Christ, that his strength may be perfected in weakness: Yea, when all things seem contrary, and his Dispensation writes bitter things against us, yet ought we to Trust in Him, *Job 13. 15.* There is a peace of wilfulness and violence in Faith, that will look always towards his Word, whatever be threatened to the contrary.

Now from this Faith in God, floweth a constant dependence and stayedness on Him, *They are stayed on Him, because they trusted in Him:* For Faith discovereth in God, such grounds, that it may lean its weight upon Him without wavering and changing. It considereth His Power, His Good-will, and His Faithfulness; He is able to perform, he is willing to do it, and he is Faithful, because he hath promised. His Greatness and Power is a high Rock, higher than we, that Faith leadeth us unto: His Love and Good-will in Jesus Christ, maketh an open entry, and ready access to that Rock; And Faithfulness engageth both to give a Shelter and Refuge to the poor Sinner. Would a Soul be any more tossed, would there be any place for wavering and doubting, if Souls considered his excellent Loving Kindness and great Goodness laid up and treasured with him, for these that trust in him? *Psal. 36. 7.* Who would not put their trust under the shadow of his Wings, and think themselves safe? Again, if his Eternal Power were pondered, how he is able to effectuate whatever he pleaseth, what Everlasting Arms He hath, that by a Word supports the Frame of the World, what he can do, if he stretch out his Arm: And then, if these two immutable things, *Heb. 6. 18.* His Promise and his Oath were looked upon, how he hath engaged himself in his Truth, and sworn in his Holiness; Would not a Soul ly safely between these three? What strong Consolation would such a Three-fold Consideration yield? Would any Wind or Tempest blow within these Walls mounted up to Heaven?

Stayedness on God is nothing else, but the fixedness of believing and trusting, *Psal. 112. 7, 8.* His

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Heart is fixed, trusting in God, his Heart is established. It is even the Mature and Peerage of Faith: Faith while it is yet in Infancy, in its Tender Years, it neither can endure Storms, nor can it confirm us in them; But when it hath sprung up and grown in that Root of *Jesse*, when it is rooted and established in Jesus Christ, then it establisheth the Soul: Faith abiding in him and taking root groweth confirmed, as a Tree that cannot easily be moved, and if you establish Faith, you shall be established.

There are Two Particulars which I conceive the Trusting Soul is stayed on, *First*, In the Meditation of God. *Secondly*, In Expectation from Him of all Good Things. When I say, the Meditation of God, I take in both Contemplation and Affection. The most part of Men have but few Thoughts of God at all, even those who trust in him, do not consider sufficiently, what a one he is in whom they believe. If Faith were vigorous and lively, it would put Men to often thinking on him, seeking to know him in his Glorious Names, the Mind would be stayed upon this Glorious Object, as the most Myste-rious and Wonderful One. How throng are Mens Minds with their Vanities? *When they awake, they are not still with God*; The Meditation of him is a burden to them; Any other thing getteth more time and thoughts. But Meditation addeth Affection to Contemplation; Men may think long upon the Heavens and their Course, but their Affections are not ravished with them: But this is the Soul stayed on God, when the Soul's desires are towards the remembrance of his Name, then Affection stayeth the Mind upon what it pitcheth on: And certainly, the Mind giveth but passing looks, constrained thoughts where the Heart is not: Here is *David's* Meditation, *Psal. 1. 2. My delight is in the Law of the Lord.* The Soul of a Believer should be constant and fixed in the Consideration of God, till he be wholly engaged to admiration and wondering. *O Lord, how excellent is thy Name! Psal. 8. 1. And*

who is like unto Thee? You all say, that you believe in God, and know his Power, you know he is Good, he is Merciful, Just, Long-suffering, Faithful, &c. But what is all this Knowledge but Ignorance, and your Light Darknes, when it doth not press you to put your Trust in his Name? You know; Nay, but you consider not what you know: This is trusting, when the Mind is stay'd on what it knoweth, when all the scattered Thoughts and Affections are called home, and united in one, to be exercised about this comprehensive Object, *The Lord our God.* It is not want of Knowledge destroyeth you, but want of Consideration of what you know, and this is brutishness. Mens Hearts do not carry Seal and Stamp of their Knowledge, because Thoughts of God and his Word are but as Passengers that go thorow a Land, as Lightning going thorow the Mind, but warms it not: And so their Practice carrieth no Impression of it either. How base is it for those who have God for their God, to be so ignorant of Him? Would not any Man willingly travel about his own Possessions? Have you such a large portion Believers, and should you be taken up with other Vanities? Should your Hearts and Minds be stay'd on them more than the Living God? There is a great Vanity and Levity in Mens Minds. *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Men, that they are Vanity.* There is an unsettledness of Spirit, we cannot pitch upon that, on which we may be stay'd: And so all the Spirits of Men are in a continual motion from one thing to another, for nothing giveth compleat satisfaction, and therefore it must go and try one after another, to see if it can find in it, what it found not in the former: And such is the inconstancy of the Spirit, that it licketh up its Vomit, and what thing it refused, it eateth it up as its Meat: The time is spent in choosing and refusing, rejecting one thing, and taking another, and again returning to what you have rejected. Thus are Men tossed up and down, and unstable in all their ways, as a Ship without Ballasting. Now Faith

Faith and Trusting in God is the ballast and weight of this inconstant Ship: It is the Anchor to stay it from being driven too and fro. If once Men would pitch upon this one Lord, who hath in himself eminently all the scattered perfections of Creatures, and infinitely more, if you would consider him, and meditate on him, till your Souls loved him, would you not be ravished with him? Would you not build your House beside him, and dwell in the Meditation of his Name? This would fix and establish you in Duties, *When I awake, I am still with Thee.* A little searching and experience discovereth emptiness in all beside, and therefore is it, that the Soul removeth sooner from such a particular Creature, than it expected; but here is *one that is past finding out*; The more I search and find, I find him the more above what I can search and find. The Creatures are but painted and fair in Mens apprehension and at a distance, but the near enjoyment of them discovereth the delusion, and sendeth a Man away ashamed, because he trusted. But the Lord God is, and there is no other, he is not as Waters that fail, no liar, he is an Everlasting Fountain, the more you dig and draw, it runs the faster, He will never send any away ashamed that trust in Him, because they shall find more than they expected.

Therefore the Soul that is stayed on Meditation of God, and knoweth him certainly, will be fixed in Expectation from him. Our Expectation from the Creatures changeth, because it is oft frustrate, disappointment meets it, it is above what is in the Creature, and so it must meet with disappointment; But as He is above our Meditation, so is He far above our Expectation: And if a Man's Experience answer his Hope, he hath no reason to change his Hope. The Lord hath often done things we looked not for, but we never looked for any thing according to the Grounds of the Word, but it was done, or a better than it. He doth not always answer our Limitations, but if he give Gold, when

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we sought Silver, are we not answered? Are we disappointed? There are Three Things that use most to disquiet and toss Mens Spirits, Sin and Wrath, future Events, and present Calamities: Faith establisheth the Soul on God in all these, and suffereth it not to be driven too and fro, with these Winds; It finds a Harbour and Refuge in God from all these. If he be pursued by the Avenger of Blood, God's Wrath and Justice, here is an open City of Refuge that he may run to, and be safe. If Iniquities compass me about, yet I will not fear, but oppose unto that great Company, the many Sufferings and Obedience of Jesus Christ. My Conscience challengeth and writeth bitter things against me, yet I have an answer in that Blood that speaketh better things nor Abels. If Sins prevail, he will purge them away: His Mercy is above all my Sin, and his Vertue and Power is above my Sin, *He hath promised, and will he not do it?* Oft-times Mens Souls are perplexed and tossed about Future Events, careful for to Morrow; this is a great torment of Spirit, it cutteth and divideth it, putteth a Man to his own Providence, as if there were no God. But he that trusteth in God, is established in this, *His Heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord*, he hath committed his Soul to him, and why may he not his Body? He hath nothing but his Promise for Eternal Salvation, and may not that same suffice for Temporal? He careth for me (saith Faith) why then should we both care about one thing? *He hath given His Son for me*, the most Precious Gift, which the World cannot match, *and will He not with Him give all these lesser things?* And thus the Believer incloseth himself within the Father's Love and Providence, and is fixed, not fearing evil tidings: For what tidings can be evil, seeing our Father hath the Sovereign disposing of all Affairs, and knoweth what is best for us? Present Dispensations often shake Men, and driveth them too and fro: Their Feet slip, and are not established, *Thou hid thy Face, and I was troubled.* But if you trusted in God, and considered

considered what is in Him to oppose to all difficulties and calamities, you would say, *I shall not be moved, tho' the Floods lift up their Voice.* If you believed his Love, would not this sweeten all His Dealings? *He maketh all work together for good.* Sovereignty, Righteousness, and Mercy, are sure and firm ground to stand upon in all Storms. You may cast Anchor at any of those, and ly secure. *It is the Lord, let Him do what He pleaseth.* This was enough to quiet the Saints in old times. *Should He give account of His Matters to us? Shall the Clay say to the Potter, Why is it thus?* His absolute right by Creation, maketh him beyond all exception, do what he please: But beside this, he is pleased and condescendeth to reason with us, and give account of his Matters, to testify to our Conscience, that He is Righteous in all his ways. It was the ground of *Jeremiah's* settling, Lam. 3: 22. *It is of the Lord's Mercy that we are not consumed:* It should have allayed and stayed *Job*, know this, thou art punished less than thy Iniquities deserve, who will set a time to plead with Him? Shall any be found Righteous before him? And this might stop all Mens Mouths, and put them in the dust to keep silence, seeing He hath Law to do infinitely more than he doth, why should not we rather proclaim his Clemency, than argue him so very hard? If to both those, you shall add the Consideration of his Mercy, that all his Paths are Mercy and Truth unto you, even when he Correcteth most severely, so that you may bless him as well for Rods, as for Meat and Clothing, and coant your self blessed when you are taught by the Rod, and the Word, the one speaking to the other, and the other sealing its Instruction: If you believed that it were a fruit of his Love, *He chasteneth every Son whom He loveth*, that because he will not let you depart from him, will not let you settle upon a present World, and forget your Country above; therefore He compasseth you about with Hedges of Thorns to keep in your way: And therefore he maketh this World bitter and unpleasant, that you

you may have no continuing City; If all this were believed, would not the Soul triumph with *Paul*, *What can separate me from the Love of God?* Not past things, for all my Sins are blotted out, and shall be remembered no more: Not present things, for they work to good, and are a fruit of his Love: Not things to come, for that is to come which shall more declare his Love than what is past. Would not a Soul sleep securely within the compass of this Power, this Love, and Faithfulness of God, without fear of dashing, or sinking?

Now judge whether a perfect peace may not flow from all this, may it not be a perfect calm, when the Mountains that environ, go up to Heaven? Not only doth the Soul trust in God, but God keepeth the trusting Soul in peace. He is the Creator of Peace, and the Preservator of it, *I create Peace, I keep him in Peace*: The same Power and Vertue is required to the preserving of a thing, and the first Being of it. Our Faith and Hope in God, is too weak an Anchor to abide all Storms: Our Cords would break, our Hands faint and weary, but *He is the Everlasting God who faileth not, and wearieth not*, He holdeth an invisible grip of us, *We are kept by His Power to Salvation*, and we are kept by His Power in Peace: *Thy Right Hand holdeth me*, saith *David*, and this helpeth me to pursue Thee. What maketh Believers Inexpugnable, Impregnable, is it their Strength? No indeed, *but Salvation will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks*: Almighty Power is a strong Wall, though invisible, this Power worketh in us, and about us.

Now Believers, pity the World about you, that knoweth not this Peace: When they ly secure, and cry, *Peace, Peace*; Alas! they are a City open without Walls as the plain Field, there is no Keeper there, nothing to hold off Destruction. Entertain your own Peace, do not grieve the Spirit who hath Sealed it: If you return to Folly after He hath spoken Peace to you, I perswade you, you shall not maintain this Peace; there may be Peace with God,

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but no Peace in thy Conscience, as long as the Whoredoms of thy Heart are to the fore: Thou may be secure, but Security is worse than Fear. Know this, that continuing in a course of Sin, entertaining any known Sin, shall trouble thy Peace. If God have spoken Peace to thee, thou shalt not lodge that Enemy in peace, *Great Peace have they that love Thy Law.* Obedience and delight in it, doth not make Peace, but it is the way of Peace, and much Meditation in the blessed Word of God, is the most excellent mean to preserve this Peace, if it be secured with much correspondence with Heaven by Prayer, *Philip. 4. 6, 7.* If you would disburden your Hearts daily at the Throne of Grace, Peace should guard and keep your Heart, and then your Peace would be perfect indeed. But because your Faith is here imperfect, your Requests few and insistent, your Follies and Iniquities many, therefore is this promised Perfection a stranger to the most part of Christians. Always what we want here, we must expect to have made up shortly: Heaven is a Land of Peace, and all things are there in full age: Here all are in Minority, it is but yet Night, but when the Day shall break up, and the Shadows flee away, and the Prince of Peace shall appear and be revealed, He shall bring Peace and Grace both with Him, and both perfect. To Him be Praise and Glory.

S E R M O N XIV.

Isa. 59. 20. And the Redeemer shall come unto Sion, to them that turn, &c.

DOctrines, As Things have their Seasons and Times, every thing is beautiful in its Season; So there is no Word of Truth, but it hath a Season and Time in which it is beautiful: And indeed, *that*

that is a great part of Wisdom, to bring forth every thing in its Season, to discern when and where, and to whom it is pertinent, and edifying, to speak such and such Truths. But there is one Doctrine that is never out of Season; And therefore, it may be Preached in Season, and out of Season, as the Apostle commandeth. Indeed to many Hearts it is always out of Season, and especially in Times of Trouble and Anguish, when it should be most seasonable; when the Opportunity may command the Beauty of it; But in it self, and to as many as have ever found the power of it on their Hearts, it is always the most seasonable and pertinent Doctrine, I mean the very Subject Matter of this Text; The News of a Redeemer to Captive Sinners, it is in it self such glad tidings, and thines with so much Beauty and Splendour to Troubled Sinners, that it casteth abroad a Luster and Beauty on the Feet of the Messengers that carry it, *Isa. 43*. It is a Cordial in Affliction, whether outward or inward, and it is withall the only True Comfort of Prosperity, it allayeth the bitterness of things that cross us, and filleth up the emptiness of things that pretend to please us. It giveth sweetness to the one, and true sweetness to the other. Reason then, that should always be welcome to us, which we stand always in need of, that it should always be new and fresh in our Affection, which is always recent and new in its Operation and Efficacy toward us. Other News, how great or good soever, suppose they were able to fill the Hearts of all in a Nation with Joy, yet they grow stale, they lose their Vertue within few Days. What Footsteps or Remainder is of all the Triumphs and Trophies of Nations, of all their Solemnities for their Victorious Success at Home and Abroad? These Great News, which once were the Subject of the Discourse of, and Delight of many Thousands, who report them now with delight? So these things that may cause Joy and Triumph to some at this time, as they cannot choose but make more Hearts sad than glad, so they will quickly lose
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even that Efficacy they have, and become tasteless as the White of an Egg to them that are most ravished with them. But my Beloved, here is glad tidings of a Redeemer come to *Sion*, to Save Sinners, which have no occasion of sadness in them to any, but to them who are not so happy as to consider them, or believe them, and they are this Day after many hundred, I may say, thousand Years since they were first published, as green and recent, as refreshing to wearied Souls as ever they were; Yea, such is the Nature of them, and such an Everlasting Spring of Consolation is in them, that the oftener they be told, and the more they be considered, the sweeter they are, they grow green in Old Age, and bring forth Fruit, and are Fat and Flourishing, and indeed, it is the Never-dying Vertue, and Everlasting Saps of this Word of Life, that maketh the Righteous so, *Psal. 92. 14.* This Word of a Redeemer at the first publishing, and for a long time, was but like Waters issuing out from under the Threshold, and then they came to the Ankles when it was published to a whole Nation, but still the longer it swells the higher above Knees and Loins, till it be a great inexhausted River, and thus it runs at this Day through the World, and hath a Healing Vertue, and a Quickning Vertue, *Ezek. 47.* And a Sanctifying Vertue, *verse 9, 12.* Now this is our Errand to you, to invite you to come to these Waters; If ye thirst, come to be quenched, if ye thirst not, ye have so much the more need to come, because you thirst after things that will not profit you, will destroy you; and your unsensibleness of your need of this is your greatest Misery.

That the Words may be more lively unto us, we may call to mind the greatest and deepest design that hath been carried on in the World, by the Maker and Ruler of the World, is the Marriage of Christ His Son with the Church: This was primely intended when He made the World, as a Palace to Celebrate it into; This was especially aimed at, when He joyned *Adam* and *Eve*, in the beginning of time together

together in Paradise, that the Second *Adam* should be more solemnly joyned to the Church at the end of Time, in the Paradise of Heaven. And this the Apostle draws out as the Samplar and Arch-copy of all Marriages and Conjunctions in the Creatures, *Eph. 5.* Now this being the great design of God, of which, all other things done in Time, are but the Footsteps and low Representations. But the great Question is, How this shall be brought about, because of the great distance and huge disproportion of the Parties. *He being the brightness of the Father's Glory*, and we being wholly eclipsed and darkened since our Fall; *He higher than the Heavens of Heavens*, and we fallen as low as Hell, into a Dungeon of Darkness and Misery, led away by Sin and Satan, lying in that abominable posture, represented in *Ezek. 16.* Not only unsuitable to engage his Love, but fit to procure even the loathing of all that pass by.

Now it being thus, the Words do furnish us with the noble Resolution of the Son, about the taking away of the distance, and the royal offer of the Father, to make the Match hold the better, both flowing from Infinite Love, in the most free and absolute manner can be imagined. The Son's Resolution, which is withall the Father's Promise, is to come into the World first, to Redeem His Spouse, and so to Marry her, *And the Redeemer shall come unto Sion, &c.* The Father's Offer (that he might not be wanting to help it forward) is to dispense by an irrevocable Covenant, having the force of an absolute Donation; His Word and Spirit to Christ and his Seed, to the Church even to the end of the World, *verse 21. As for me, this is my Covenant.* The Son hath done his part, and is to express His Infinite Love, Infinite Condescendency, and stooping below His Majesty: Now, as for me, I will shew my Good-will to it, in my Infinite Bounty and Riches of Grace to the Church, He hath given Himself for Her, I will give my Spirit, and thus it cannot but hold.

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We shall speak a word then of these Three; *First*, What Estate and Condition Christ findeth his Church into, out of which, she must be taken to be His Spouse; Then what way and course is laid down by the Council of Heaven, to fill up the infinite distance between Christ and Sinners; And to close all, we shall shew you the suitableness of these Promises, and the wonderful fitness of this Doctrine, to the Church at this time *Isaiah* Preached it, and at all times.

The *First* is supposed in the Words, Redemption supponeth Captivity, or Slavery, Redemption of Persons, importeth Captivity and Slavery of these Persons, and Redemption of other things that belong to Persons, importeth Sale, or Alienation of our right to them. Of both, Personal-redemption is the greatest and most difficult; Yet both we have need of, for our Estate and Fortune (so to speak) is lost, *For all Men have Sinned, and come short of the Glory of God*, Rom. 3. 23. That Inheritance of Eternal Life, we have mortgaged it, and given away our right to it; the Favour of God and the Blessedness of Communion with him, was *Adam's* Birth-right, and by a free Donation was made his proper Inheritance and Possession, to be transmitted to his Posterity. But, O how, for how small a thing did he give it away, for a little taste of an Apple, he sold his Estate! And both he and we may lament over it, as the King that was constrained to render himself and all his Army for want of Water, when he tasted it, for how small a thing (saith he) have I lost my Kingdom? Then our Persons are in a State of Bondage, in Captivity and Slavery. Captives under the Wrath of God, and Slaves or Servants to Sin. There needed no greater difference and difformity between Christ and us, than this, our Servitude and Bondage to Sin, which truly is the basest and most abominable Vassallage in the World. The abasement of the Highest Prince, to the vilest Servitude under the basest Creatures in his Dominion, is but a shadow

shadow of that loathsome and ugly posture of our Souls. This Servitude doth (in a manner) unman us, and transform us into Beasts. Certainly it is that, which in the Holy Eyes of God, is more loathsome than any thing beside; He seeth not that deformity in Poverty, Nakedness, Sickness, Slavery, let a Man be as miserable as *Job* on his Dung-hill, it is not so much that, as the unseen and undiscerned Posture and Habit of their Souls, that he abominateth. Now what a Match is this, for the Highest and Holiest Prince, the Son of the greatest King and Heir of all things? But if you add to this Slavery, that Captivity under the Curse and Wrath of God, that all Men are shut up and inclosed in the Prison of God's faithful and irrevocable Sentence of Condemnation, and given over by the Righteous Judgement of God, to be kept by Satan in Everlasting Chains of Darknes: He keepeth Men now, by the invisible Cords of their own Sins, but these Chains of Darknes are reserved for both him and Men. Now indeed, this supperaddeth a great difficulty to the business, the other may be a difficulty to his Mind and Affection, because there is nothing to procure Love, but all that may enforce Hatred and Loathing: But suppose his infinite Love could come over this stay, could leap over this Mountain by the freedom of it; Yet there is a greater impediment in the way, that may seem difficult to his Power, and it is the Justice and Power of God, enclosing Sinners and shutting them up for Eternal Wrath, till a due satisfaction be had from, or for them. You see then, how infinite the distance is betwixt him and us, and how great the difficulty is, to bring about this intended Union. Angels were sent with Flaming-swords to encompass the Tree of Life, and keep it from Man, but Man is environed by the Curse of the Almighty God, the Justice, the Faithfulness, and the Power of God do Guard or set a Watch about him, that there is no access to him to save him, but by undergoing the greatest danger, and undertaking the

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This being the Case then, the distance being so vast, and the difficulty so great, the distance being Two-fold, between His Nature and ours, and between our Quality and His: An infinite distance between His Divine Nature and our Flesh, and besides an extream contrariety between the Holiness of his Nature, and the Sinfulness of ours; Such a repugnanity, as there is no reconciliation of them. You know what *Paul* speaketh of the Marriage of Christians with Idolaters: How much more will it hold here? *What communion can be between Light and Darkness; between God and Belial?* Is it possible these can be Reduced to Amity, and brought so so near an Union? Yet for all this it is possible; But Love and Wisdom must find out the way. Infinite Love, and infinite Wisdom consulting together, What distance can they not swallow up? What difficulty can they not overcome?

And here you have it, the distance undertaken to be removed, both by the Father and the Son, (for all this while we can do nothing to help it forward; While the blessed Plot is going on, we are posting the faster to our own Destruction) and this is the way condescended upon. *First*, To fill up that wide gap between His Divine Spiritual Nature, and our Mortal Fleshly Nature, it is agreed upon, that the Son shall come in our Flesh, and be made partaker of Flesh and Blood with the Children. And this is meant by this Promise; *The Redeemer shall come to Zion.* Which is plainly expressed by his own Mouth, *John 16. 28. I came forth from the Father, and come into the World.* There being such a distance between his Majesty and our baseness, Love maketh him stoop down and humble himself to the very State of a Servant, *Philip. 2. 7, 8.* And thus the Humiliation of Christ filleth up the first distance, for Love and Majesty cannot long dwell together, *Nec in una sede morantur, Majestas & amor:* But Love will draw Majesty down below it self, to meet

meet with the Object of it. This was the great Journey Christ took to meet with us, and it is downward below Himself, but His Love hath chosen it, to be like us, tho' He should be unlike Himself. How divinely doth the Divine Apostle speak of it, *And the Word was made Flesh, and He dwelt among us*, John 1. 14. And therefore the Children of Adam, may in verity say of Him, what the Holy Trinity, in a Holy Irony spake of Man, *Lo, He is become as one of us*. It was a singular and eminent Priviledge conferred upon Man in his first Creation, that the Trinity (in a manner) consulted about him, *Let us make Man after our Image*; But now when Man hath lost that Image, to have such a result of the Council of the Trinity about it, *Let one of us be made Man*, to make up the distance between Man and us; O what Soul can rightly conceive it without Ravishment and Wonder, without an Extasie of Admiration and Affection, that the Lord should become a Servant! The Heir of all Things, be stript naked of all! The Brightness of the Father's Glory, be thus eclipsed and darkned! And in a word, that which comprehendeth all Wonders in the Creation, who made all things, He Himself made of a Woman! And God became a Man, and all this out of His Infinite Love, to give a Demonstration of Love to the World; So high a Person abased, to exalt so base and low as we are! There is a Mystery in this, a great Mystery, a Mystery of Wisdom, to swallow up the Understanding with Wonder; And a Mystery of Love, to ravish the Hearts of Men with Affection, Depths of both, in the Emptiness of the Son of God. The Prophet doubting what was commanded, to seek a Sign, whether in Heaven above, or in the Depth beneath, but what he would not ask, God gave in his great Mercy; *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive a Son, and they shall call His Name Immanuel*: A Sign indeed from Heaven, and the height of Heaven, because he is God, and a Sign from the Depth beneath too, because he is Man, *God with us*, and so composed to

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unite Heaven and Earth together: *God with us*,
 that He might at length bring us to be with God.
 He became *Immanuel*, that he might make us *Im-*
melantus. If that was given as Tidings of great Joy,
 and as the highest and deepest sign of Love and Fa-
 vour, at that time to uphold the fainting Church,
 O how much more may it now comfort us, when
 it is not a Virgin shall conceive, but a Virgin hath
 conceived? May not the Joy be increased, that the
 Redeemer is not to come, but come already, and
 hath made up that wide separation, which was be-
 tween us and him, by his low condescendency to
 his Union with our Nature? This is one step of
 Advancement towards that Happy Marriage, that
the whole Creation seems to groan and travail for,
 Rom. 8. 22. But yet there is a great Difficulty in
 the way. We are in a State of Captivity, we are
 Prisoners of Justice, have sold our selves, and our
 Happiness; And now our Natural Inheritance lies
 in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, heirs of Wrath,
 concluded under the Curse of God. And indeed this
 was insuperable to all Flesh; Neither Men nor An-
 gels could ransom us from this: The Redemption
 of the Soul of Man is so precious, and the Redemp-
 tion of the Inheritance of Man, (that is Heaven;) *is*
 so precious too, that none in Heaven or Earth
 can be found, that can pay the price of them, so
 that it would have ceased for ever; And here the
 great design of Christ's Union with Sinners, would
 have marred and miscarried, if himself had not un-
 dertaken to overcome this too: And indeed, as
 there could none be found to open the Seals of the
 Book of God's Decrees concerning his Church, none
 worthy in Heaven or Earth, but the Lamb, the
 Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*: He prevailed to open
 it, and loose the Seals thereof, *Rev. 5. 3, 4, 5.* So
 there could none be found in Heaven or Earth, nei-
 ther under the Earth, worthy to undertake or ac-
 complish this work, or able to open the Seals of the
 Book of God's Curses, or to blot out the Hand-
 writing of Ordinances that was against us, or to
 open

open the Prison of Death, into which Man was shut up. None, I say, hath been found worthy, or prevailed, but the Lamb of God, and Lion of the Tribe of Judah: And therefore, the Four and Twenty Elders that sit round about the Throne, and the Four Beasts, or innumerable Company of Angels, and Spirits of just Men made perfect, fell down before the Lamb, every one of them with Harps, and they sung a new Song, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing*; For Thou hast Redeemed us to God by Thy Blood. And every Creature says Amen to this, and consents to this, to do Him Homage: To him who alone was worthy, and as willing to it, as worthy for it. I think the 16. Verse of this Chapter gives us a sensible representation of this. The preceeding Discourse from the beginning, holding out the sinful and deplorable condition of that People, and in them as a Type of the desperate wickedness of all Mankind, and withall their desperate Misery, for *Paul, Rom. 3.* maketh the Application for us; and from this, concludeth all under Sin, and so all under Wrath, all Guilty, that every Mouth may be stopt: Men waiting for Light, and beholding Obscurity, for Brightness, but walking in Darkness, groping for the Wall, like the Blind stumbling at Noon-day, as in the Night, and in Desolate Places as Dead Men, all roaring like Beasts, and mourning like Doves, whenever the apprehension of the Terror of God entrencheth. Now it is subjoyned, Verse 16. *And he saw that there was no Man* &c. As if he had waited and looked thorow all the World, if any would appear, either to speak or do for Man, if any would offer themselves, and interpose themselves for his Salvation. Therefore his own Arm brought Salvation, and his Righteousness sustained him. Therefore, the Son of God steps in and offers himself, as if God had first assayed all others, and when Heaven is full of wonder and silence, He breaks out in this, *Lo, I come to do Thy*

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Will, Psal. 40. Since I have gotten a Body to be like Sinners, I will also come in their place, and I will give my Life a Ransom for them. And therefore it is subjoyned, *The Redeemer shall come to Sion*: He shall come Clothed with Vengeance and Indignation as a Garment, against the Enemies of his Church, Sin and Satan, in Zeal and Burning Love to his designed Spouse; He shall strengthen himself, and stir up his Might and Fury, against all that detain her Captive.

Now indeed, he is the only fittest Person for this Business in Heaven or Earth, for he hath both right to do it, and he hath only Might and Power to accomplish it. He hath right to the Redemption of Sinners, because he is our Kinsman, nearest of Blood to us. Now you know the right of Redemption belongeth to the Kinsman, *Lev. 25. 25.*

And therefore, when the nearest Kinsman could not redeem *Naomi* and *Ruth's* parcel of Land, *Boaz* he did it as being next: And suitable to this, our Lord *Jesus* when others as near could not, and were not able: He hath done it, and taken Men and Angels to witnesses, that he hath first Redeemed us, that he might Marry us, as *Eph. 5.* That he hath purchased us to be his Wife; And indeed the very word imports this. *Goel* a Redeemer and Kinsman, passing under one word: So *Job*, *I know that my Redeemer, or my Kinsman liveth.* And because our Kinsman, therefore most interested in our Redemption; For, *for this end he became partaker of Flesh and Blood with the Children, that he might destroy our greatest Enemy, Satan, and redeem us,* *Heb. 2. 14.* And besides, he hath right to Redemption, as the Churches Husband, because he must mediate between her and all others, none can reach her, except he please, or prosecute a Plea against her, as in the Case of the Wives making a Vow, if her Husband consented not, it was void, *Numb. 30.* But if he heard of it, and held his peace, it was confirmed. Now the Lord *Jesus* hath known this Deplorable Estate

we are Captives into; And he hath testified his utter dislike, of our binding over our selves to Death, and resigning our selves to Satan: And therefore, this Bondage in which we are detained, is not confirmed and ratified, but he hath right remaining to Redeem us from the hand of all our Enemies. But then, he alone hath Might and Power to do it, for God hath laid help on him, and made him able and mighty, to Save us to the uttermost. It was not Gold or Silver, or corruptible things; Suppose the whole Earth were turned into Gold, or precious Stones; He must give Person for Person, and one Person equivalent to all, his own Life, his own Blood for us; And the value of this was infinitely raised by the stamp of his Divinity put upon it: The King for the Servant, one that knew no Sin for Sinners, yea, God for Man; This superadds infinite worth, and makes it an over ransom, and over-purchase, a ransom to buy our Persons from Hell, a purchase to redeem us to our Inheritance, Heaven that we had lost, and these two files it gets; *ΑΥΤΡΟΝ ΑΝΤΙΛΥΤΡΟΝ.*

Now you see the great Difficulty is overcome and taken out of the way, Christ being made a Curse, hath purchased a Redemption from the Curse of the Law, *Gal. 4. 13.* But yet, there is another point of vast distance, I may say, Contrariety and Enmity between us and him; He is Holy and Undeified, all Fair, and no Spot in him; We are wholly defiled and depraved by Sin, our Souls are become the Habitation of Devils, and a Cage of every unclean and hateful Bird: In a word, He hath not only our Enemies to overcome, but our own Hearts to conquer, and our Enmity to take away. This makes the widest separation from him. Now he filled up much of the Distance, with his taking our Flesh, and he removed the great Difficulty, by dying in our Flesh, His Humiliation to be a Man brought him nearer us; And his further Humiliation, to be a Dying, Crucified and Buried Man, brought Him

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yet a step nearer us. But nearer He cannot come, for lower He cannot be, except He were a Sinner, which would marr the whole design, and take away all the Comfort of his Likeness to us; Therefore, since He hath come so low down to us, it is suitable we be raised up one step to meet Him: And so the Exaltation of Sinners shall make up all the Distance, and bring the Two Parties to that long since designed, and long desired Meeting. Now for this end and purpose, the Son undertakes the Redemption of his Church, from Sin and Ungodliness as well as Wrath; And therefore you have that, which is expressed as the Character of the Redeemed in this *Verse*. It is expounded as the great Point or Part of the Redemption it self, by the Apostle, *Rom. 11. The Redeemer shall come to Sion, to turn all ungodliness from Jacob.* And so his end was not only to be partaker of our Nature, but to make us partakers of the Divine Nature; And therefore the Father out of His Love to this Business, He promiseth to send his Spirit to dwell in our Hearts, to make the Word sound in our Mouths and Ears, and the Spirit to work in our Hearts, and this Exaltation of Sinners to the Participation of the Holy Spirit, together with Christ's Humiliation, to partake of our Flesh makes up the full Distance, and bringeth Christ and his Church to that Holy Patient Impatience, and longing for the Day when it shall be Solemnized in Heaven. *The Spirit within us, says, Come, and the Bride says, Come, even so, come Lord Jesus.* And he waits for nothing, but the Compleating and Adorning of all the rest, that there may be one Jubilee for all, and for ever. Now I wish we could understand the Absolute and Free Tenour of God's Covenant: There is much Controversie Speculative about the Condition of the Covenant, about the Promises, whether Absolute, or Conditional; And there is too much Practical Debate in perplexed Consciences about this, how to find something in themselves to fit and fashion them for the Redemption. But truly if we would not disjoyn

and dismember the Truth of God, but take it all intirely as one great design of Love and Mercy revealed to Sinners, and so conjoyn the Promises of the Covenant into one bundle, we would certainly find that it hath the Voice of *Jacob*, tho' it seem to have the Hand of *Esau*; We find an absolute, most free and inconditioned Sense, when there is a conditional strain and shadow of words in some places. The truth is, the turning of Souls from Ungodliness, is not properly a Condition exacted from us, as a Promise to be performed in us, and the chiefest part of Christ's Redemption. And tho' some abuse the Grace of God, and turn it into wantonness and liberty: Yet certainly, this Doctrine that makes the greatest part of the glad news of the Gospel to be Redemption from Sin, and the pouring out of the Spirit, is the greatest perswasive to a Godly Conversation, and the most deadly Enemy to all Ungodliness.

I thought to have spoken more of that *Third Thing* I proponed, but take it in a word. This was always proponed to the Church, as the strongest Cordial, it was given here as the greatest Consolation in all their long Captivity, that this Redeemer was afterwards to come, whose Vertue was then living, and present to the quickning and comforting of Souls. It was thought enough to uphold in a most desperate strait: *To us a Child is born*, Isa. 9. 6. I wish we could take it so; Certainly it was the Character of a Believer before Christ's coming, that he was one that was looking and waiting for the Salvation of *Israel*, by this Redeemer. But now we are surrounded with Consolation before and behind, Christ already come, so that we may in Joy say, *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him*; Others waited and longed, and we see Him: And Christ shortly to come again without Sin, to our Salvation. And what could be able to take our Joy from us, if we had one Eye always back to His first coming, and another always forward to His coming again?

S E R M O N

S E R M O N XV.

Iſa. 64. 6, 7. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our Righteousneſſes are as filthy Rags, &c.

THIS Peoples Condition agreeth well with ours, tho' the Lord's Dealing be very different. The Confessory Part of this Prayer belongeth to us now; And strange it is, that there is such odds of the Lord's Dispensations, when there is no difference in our Conditions: Always, we know not how soon the Complaint may be ours also. This Prayer was prayed long before the Judgement and Captivity came on, so that it had a Propheſie in the Bosom of it: Nay, it was the most kindly and affectionate way of warning the People could get, for *Isaiah* to pour forth such a Prayer, as if he beheld with his Eyes the Calamitie, as already come: And indeed it becometh us so to look on the Word, as if it gave a present Being to Things as certain and sensible, as if they were really. What strange Stupidity must be in us, when present things, inflicted Judgements, committed Sins, do not so much affect us, as the foresight of them did move *Isaiah*? Always, as this was registrate for the Peoples use, to cause them still look on Judgements threatened, as performed and present, and anticipate the Day of Affliction by Repentance: And also to be a Patern to them, how to deal with God, and plead with him from such grounds of Mercy and Covenant Interest; So it may be to us a warning, especially when Sin is come to the Maturity, and our secure backsliding Condition is with Child of sad Judgements, when the Harvest seemeth ripe to put the Sickle into it.

There is in these Two Verses, a Confession of their own Sinfulness, from which grounds they justify
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God's proceeding with them; They take the Cause upon themselves, and justifie him in his Judging, whether Temporal or Spiritual Plagues were inflicted. In this *Verse*, they take a general Survey of their Sinful Estate, concluding themselves unclean, and all their Performances and commanded Duties, which they counted once their Righteousness: And from this ground, they clear God's dealing with them, and put their Mouth in the Dust, and so from the Lord's Judgement they are forced to enter into a Search of the Cause, so much Sin, and from discovered Sin, they pronounce God righteous in his Judgement: perceiving a great difference in the Lord's manner of dealing with them, and their Fathers, they do not refound it upon God who is Righteous in all his Ways, but retort it upon themselves, and find a vast discrepancy between themselves and their Fathers, *Verse 5*. And so it was no wonder that God's Dispensation changed upon them; God was wont to meet others, to shew himself Gracious even to prevent Strokes; But now he was wroth with them; Nay, but there is good cause for it, *They rejoiced and wrought Righteousness*, but we have Sinned. And this may be said in the general, never one needeth to quarrel God for severe dealing. If he deal worse with one than with another, let every Man look into his own Bosom, and see Reason sufficient, yea, more provocation in themselves than others. Always in this *Verse*, they come to a more distinct view of their loathsome Condition. Any Body may wrap up their Repentance in a General Notion of Sin, but they declare themselves to be more touched with it, and condescend on Particulars, yet such Particulars as comprehend many others. And in this Confession, you may look on the Spirit's work, having some Characters of the Spirit in it. *First*, They take a general view of their uncleanness and loathsome Estate by Sin: Not only do they see Sin, but Sin in the sinfulness of it, and uncleanness of it. *Secondly*, They not only conclude so of the

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Natural Estate they were born into, and the loathsomeness of their many foul scandals among them: But they go a further length, to pass as severe a Sentence on their Duties and Ordinances, as God hath done, *Isa. 1. and 66.* The Spirit convinceth according to Scriptures Light, and not according to the dark spark of Natures Light; and so that which Nature would have busked it self with as its Ornament, that which they had covered themselves with as their Garment, had spread their Duties as Robes of Righteousness over their Sins to hide them, all this now goeth under the name of filthiness and sin; They see themselves wrapt up in as vile Rags as they covered and hid; Commanded Duties and manifest Breaches come in one Category: And not only is it some of them which their own Conscience could challenge in the Time, but all of them, and all kinds of them, Moral and Ceremonial Duties that were most Sincere, had most Affection in them, all of them are filthy Rags now, which but of late were their Righteousness. *Thirdly*, There is an universality, not only of the Actions, but of Persons, not only all the Peoples, or Multitudes Performances are abomination, but all of them, *Isaiah*, and one and another, the holiest of them come in, in this Category and Rank: *We are all unclean, &c.* Tho' the People, it may be, could not joyn Holy *Isaiah* with themselves, yet humble *Isaiah* will joyn himself with the People, and come in in one Prayer: And no doubt, he was as sensible of Sin now, as when he began to Prophecy; and growing in Holiness, he must grow also in Sense of Sinfulness: Seeing at the first sight of God's Holiness and Glory, he cried, *Unclean, &c. Isa. 6. 5.* Certainly he doth so now, from such a principle of access to God's Holiness, which maketh him abhorre himself in Dust and Ashes. *Fourthly*, They are not content with such a general; but condescend to two special things, two Spiritual Sins, *to wit*, Omission, or shifting of Spiritual Duties, which contained the Substance of

Worship: *None calleth on Thee, few or none, none to count upon, calleth on Thee, that is, careth for immediate access and approaching unto God in Prayer and Meditation, &c.* Albeit External and Temple Duties be frequent, yet who prayeth in Secret, or if any pray, that cannot come in count, the Lord knoweth them not, because they want the Spirit's Stamp on them? This must be some other thing, nor the General Conviction of Sin which the World hath, who think they pray all their days; Here People who though they make many Prayers, *Isa. 1.* yet they see them no Prayers; and no calling on God's Name now. But *Fifthly*, To make the Challenge the more, and the Confession more Spiritual and Compleat, there is discovered unto them this Ground of their Slackness and Negligence in all Spiritual Duties, *None stirrath up himself to take hold on Thee.* Here is the want of the Exercise of Faith: Faith is the Soul's hand and grip, *John 1. 12. Heb. 6. 18. 1 Tim. 6. 12. Isa. 27. 5.* No Body awaketh themselves out of their Deadness and Security, to lay hold on Thee: Lord, Thou art going away, and taking Goodnight of the Land, and no Body is like to hold Thee by the Garment: *No Jacobs here, who will not let Thee go, till Thou blest them;* None to prevail with Thy Majesty, every one is like to give Christ a free Passport and Testimonial to go abroad, and are almost *Gadarens*, to pray Him to depart out of their Coasts. There is a strange looseness and indifferency in Mens Spirits concerning the one thing necessary: Men ly by and dream over their Days, and never putteth the Soul's Estate out of question: None will give so much pains, as to clear their Interest in Thee, to lay hold on Thee, so as they may make Peace with Thee. Now can there be a more ample and lively Description of our Estate, both of the Land and of particular Persons of it? Since this must not be limited to the Nation of the *Jews*, tho' the Prophet spake of the generality of them: Yet no doubt, all Mankind is included in the first Six Verses:

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And any secure People may be included in the Seventh Verse, for Paul applieth even such like Speeches, (Rom. 13.) that were spoken, as you would think, of David's Enemies only; Yet the Spirit of God knowing the Mind of the Spirit, maketh a more general use of their Condition, to hold out the Natural Estate of all Men out of Christ Jesus.

But there are in these Two Verses, other Two Things, beside the Acknowledgment of Sin; First, The Acknowledgment of God's Righteousness in Punishing them, for now they need not quarrel with God, they find the Cause of their fading in their own Bosom, they now joyn Sin and Punishment together, whereas in the time of their Prosperity, they separated Punishment from Sin, and in the time of their Security in Adversity, they separated Sin from Punishment, at one time making bare Confession of Sin, without Fear of God's Justice, at another time, Fretting and Murmuring at his Judgements, without the Sense of their Sin; But now they joyn both these, and the sight and sense of God's displeasure maketh Sin more bitter, and to abound more, and to appear in the loathsome and provoking nature of it, so that their acknowledgment hath an edge upon it. And again, the Sight and Sense of Sin maketh the Judgement appear most righteous, and stoppeth their Mouth from Murmuring. In the time of their Impenitency under the Rod, their Language was very indifferent, Ezek. 18. 2. *The Fathers have eaten some Grapes, and the Childrens Teeth are set on edge.* They have sinned, and we suffer, they have done the wrong, and we pay for it: But it is not so now, Verse 5. *The Fathers have done righteousness in respect of us, and thou was good unto them, but we are all unclean, and have sinned, and so we are punished.* Secondly, They find some cause and ground in God of their general defection, not that he is the cause of their Sin, but in a righteous way he punished

nished Sin with Sin. God hid his Face, denied special Grace and Influence; and so they ly still in their Security, and their Sin became a Spiritual Plague. Or this may be so read, None calleth on thy Name, when thou hid thy Face from us, and when thou consumed us because of our Iniquities; And so it serveth to aggravate their deep Security, that tho' the Lord was departing from them, yet none would keep him, and hold him; Tho' he did strike, yet they prayed not, Affliction did not awake them out of Security, and so the last words, *Thou hast consumed us, &c.* Are differently expounded and read; Some make it thus, as it is in the Translation, *Thou hast hid thy Face, and left us in a Spiritual deadness*, that so there might be no impediment to bring on deserved Judgement; If we had called on thee, and laid hold on thee, it might have been prevented, we might have prevailed with God, but now our defence is removed, thou hast given us up to a Spirit of Slumber, and so we have no Shield to hold off the Stroke, thou hast now good leave to consume us for our Sins: Another Sense may be (Thou hast suffered us to consume in our Iniquity, thou hast given us up to the hand of our Sins:) And this is also a consequent of his hiding his Face, because thou hid thy Face, thou lettest us perish in our Sins; There needeth no more for our Consumption, but only help us not out of them, for we can soon destroy our selves.

First, Sin is in its own Nature loathsome, and maketh one unclean before God: Sins Nature is Filthiness, Vileness, so doth *Isaiah* speak of himself, *Chapter 6. 5.* when he saw God's Holiness; So doth *Job* abhorre himself, which is the Affection which turneth a Man's Face off a loathsome object, when he saw God, *Job 40. 4. and 42. 6.* Look how loathsome our Natural Condition is holden out by God Himself, *Ezek. 16.* You cannot imagine any deformity in the Creature, any filthiness, but it is there. The filthiness and vileness of Sin shall appear, if we consider, *First*, Sin is a Transgression of

of the Holy and Spiritual Command; and so a vile thing; *The Command is Holy and Good*, Rom. 7. And Sin violateth and goeth flat contrary to the Command, 1 *John* 3. When so just and so equitable a Law is given, God might have exacted other rigorous Duties from us, but when it is so framed, that the Conscience must cry out, All is Equity, all is Righteous, and more than Righteous, thou might command more, and reward none: It is Justice to Command, but it is Mercy to Promise Life to Obedience, which I owe: What then must the offence be, against such a Just Command, and so Holy? If Holiness be the Beauty of the Creation, Sin must be the Deformity of it, the only Spot in its Face.

Secondly, Look upon Sin in the sight of God's Holiness and Infinite Majesty, and O how hainous will it appear? And therefore no Man hath seen Sin in the vileness of it, but in the Light of God's Countenance. As *Isa.* 6. 5. *Job* 40. and 42. *God is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, He cannot look on it, *Habak.* 1. 13. All other things beside Sin, God looketh on them as bearing some mark of His own Image, *All was very good, and God saw it*, *Gen.* 1. and 2. Even the basest Creatures God looketh on them, and seeth Himself in them: But Sin is only God's Eye-sore, that His Holiness cannot away with, it is most contrary unto Him. And as to his Sovereignty, it is an high contempt and rebellion done to God's Majesty, it putteth God off the Throne, will take no Law from Him, will not acknowledge His Law, but (as it were) spitteth in His Face, and establisheth another God. There is no punishment so evil, that God will not own as His Work, and declare Himself to be the Author of it, but only Sin; His Soul abhorreth it, His Holy Will is against it, He will have no fellowship with it: It is so contrary to Him, contradicted His Will, debaseth His Authority, despiseth His Sovereignty, vilipendeth His Truth. There is a
kind

kind of infiniteness in it: Nothing can express it, but it self, no name worse than it self to set it out; The Apostle can get no other Epithet to it, Rom. 7. 13. *Sinful Sin*; so that it cometh in most direct opposition unto God. All that is in God, is God Himself, and there is no Name can express him sufficiently; If you say *God*, you say more than can be express'd by many thousand other words; So is it here, *Sin* is purely *Sin*. God is purely Good and Holy, without mixture, Holiness it self: *Sin* is simply evil, without mixture, unholiness it self; Whatever is in it, is *Sin*, is uncleanness: *Sin* is an infinite wrong, and an infinite and boundless filthiness, because of the Infinite Person wronged, it is an Offence of Infinite Majesty: and the Person wronged aggravateth the Offence; If it be simply contrary to Infinite Holiness, it must be in that respect, infinite unholiness and uncleanness.

Thirdly, Look upon the sad Effects and Consequences of *Sin*, how Miserable, how Ruinous it hath made Man, and all the Creation, and how vile must it be? *First*, Look on Man's Native Beauty and Excellency, how Beautiful a Creature? But *Sin* hath cast him down from the top of his Excellency: *Sin* made *Adam* of a Friend, an Enemy, of a Courtier with God, an open Rebel: Was not Man's Soul of more price, nor all the World, so that nothing can exchange it? Yet hath *Sin* debased it, and prostitute it, to all vile filthy pleasures, hath made the Immortal Spirit dwell on the Dunghill, feed on Ashes, catch Vanities, lying Vanities, pour out it self to them, serve all the Creatures, whereae it should have made them Servants, yea, a Slave to his own greatest Enemy, to the Ground he treadeth upon: O what a degenerate Plant! It was a noble Vine once in Paradise, but *Sin* hath made it a wild one, to bring forth Sowre grapes. What is there in all the World could defile a Man? Math. 15. 20. *Nothing that goeth out, or cometh in, but Sin that proceedeth out of the Heart.*

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Man was all Light, his Judgement shined into his Affections, and thorow all the Man: But Sin hath made all Darkness, closed up the poor Captives Understanding, hath built up a thick Wall of gross corrupted Affections about it, so that Light can neither get in nor out. The Soul was like a clear running Fountain, which yielded fresh clear Streams of Holy Inclinations, Desires, Affections, Actions, and emptied it self in the Sea of Immense Majesty, from which, these Streams first flowed: But now it is a standing putrified Puddle, that casteth a vile stink round about, and hath no Issue towards God. Man was a Glorious Creature, fit to be Lord over the Work of God's own Hands, and therefore had God's Image in a special manner, Holiness and Righteousness; God's Nature, a piece of Divinity was stamped on Man, which outshined all Created Perfections; The Sun might blush when it looked on him; For what was Material Glory, to the Glory of Holiness and Beauty of God's Image? But Sin hath robbed poor Man of this Glorious Image, hath defaced Man, marred all his Glory, put on an hellish likeness on him: Holiness only putteth the difference between Angels in Heaven and Devils in Hell; And Sin only hath made the difference, between Adam in Paradise, and Sinners on the cursed ground, *Rom. 3. 23.*

Secondly, Sin hath so redounded through Man unto all the Creation, that it hath defiled it, and made it corruptible and subject to vanity, *Rom. 8. 20, &c.* So that this is a Spot in all the Creatures Face, that Man hath Sinned, and used all as Weapons of Unrighteousness, so that now the Creature groaneth to be delivered.

Thirdly, It hath brought on all the Misery that is come on Man, or that is to come; It hath brought on Death and Damnation as its Wages, and the Curse of the Eternal God, *Gal. 3. 13. Rom. 6. 23.* How odious then an Evil must it be, that hath so much Evil in it, yea, all Evil in the Bosom of it? Hell is not Evil in respect of Sin, for Sin deserveth Hell:

Hell: It hath ruined Man, and made all the beautiful order of the Creation to change.

Fourthly, It separateth Man from God, which is worst of all; And this is included in the Text, *We are all as an unclean thing, or Man, as a Leperous* Man set apart, because of Pollution, that may not cometo the Temple, or worship God; so hath Iniquity separated between God and us, *Isa. 59. 2.* And O how sad a Divorcement is this? It maketh Men without God in the World, in whom we live, and move, and have our Being, in whose Favour is Life, and at whose Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore. Now poor Man is made Miserable, deprived of his Felicity, which only consisted in Enjoyment of God: Sin as a thick Partition wall is come in between, Enmity also is come in, and divideth old Friends, *Eph. 2. 14, 15, 16, 17.* And now no Heavenly, or Comfortable Influence can break thorow: The Night of Darknes is begun, which must prove Everlasting, except the Partition-wall be removed, all must wither and decay as without the Sun.

Fifthly, Look on the Price paid for Sin, on the cleansing that washeth it away, and you may see unspeakable deformity and vileness in it: The Redemption of the Soul is precious, Silver and Gold and precious Stones will not do it, that would be utterly contemned: What (saith God) presumptuous Sinner, will thou give me a Farthing in payment of a Sum, which all the World sold at the dearest, would not discharge? *Psal. 49. 7, 8. 1 Pet. 1. 18.* It is no corruptible thing, but the Blood of the Son of God. O what must the Debt be, when the Price is so Infinite? The Son of God must dy; Nay, it is not Sacrifice or Offering, Lo, I come to do Thy Will, it is Christ Himself that is the Ransom, *Psal. 40. 6, 7.* And it is not much Sore or Nitre, it is not much Repentance and Tears that will wash away this filthiness. No, it is of a deeper dye, it is Crimson ingrained filthiness, *Jer. 2. 22.* And *Isa. 1. 6.* Blood of Bulls and Goats cannot do it, but only the Blood of the Immaculat Lamb, offered up by Himself,

Himself, Heb. 10. 4, 5. *The Blood of Him who by the Eternal Spirit offered up Himself without spot unto God*, Heb. 9. 14. What must Sin be, that must have such a Fountain opened for it? It must be strange uncleanness, when the Blood of Christ only can cleanse it, Zech. 13. 1.

We all, &c.] Mark, *Secondly*, Sin hath gone over us all, and made all Mankind unclean, Rom. 3. 22. and 10. Every one of Adam's Posterity is born unclean, *For who can bring an clean thing out of an unclean?* Job 14. 4. Consider *First*, How Sin defaced innocent Adam, how one Sin made him so vile, and spoiled him of the Divine Nature, and so the Root was made unclean, and the Branches must follow the Root, and so are we all born and conceived in Sin, Psal. 51. 5. We carry in us Original Corruption, flowing from the first Actual Sin of Adam, and this maketh poor Children before they do Good or Evil, to be abominably vile in God's Sight, even as the Child is set out, Ezek. 16. Every one cometh of Evil Parents, all come of Adam the Rebel: What a loathsome sight would a Child be to us so described? *Cast out in the open Field, to the loathing of its Person in the Day it is born:* And what must it all be before God, *who is of purer Eyes than to behold Sin?* *Secondly*, Unto all this we have added innumerable Actual Transgressions, as so many filthy Streams flowing out at the Members, from the inward Puddle of Original Corruption; And so how much more vile are we all, nor Infants can be, or Adam was in the Day he was cast out of Paradise? And thus, Rom. 3. from verse 10. are the Branches set down, in Word, Thought, and Deed, so that all the Inclinations and Motions, and Actions of the Man are only evil continually. Every Man shall find his Count past counting: One Days Faults would weary you, but what will your whole Life do? Known Sins are innumerable, what must unknown be? Every Man's Heart is like the troubled Sea, that casteth up Mire and Dirt daily, and cannot be at rest. The Heart

Heart is daily flowing and ebbing in this Corruption, it cometh out daily to the Borders of all the Members; And there are some high Spring-tides, when Sin aboundeth more. When in one Member of the Tongue a World of Evil is, What can be in all the Members? And what in the Soul, that is more capable than all the World? Well then, every Man hath Sinned in *Adam*, and hath Sinned also in his own Person, and Sealed *Adam's* first Rebellion, by so many thousand Actions like it: Every Man hath approved the Sin that first ruined Man, and made himself much more loathsome nor *Adam* was: Therefore all Mankind may say, *We all are as an unclean thing*. Now from all this, we would gladly discover unto you, what your Condition is by Sin; If the Lord would shine, how vile would you be? Always we must declare this unto you, in the Lord's name, you are all unclean, not only born in Sin and Iniquity, not only have you a Body of Death within you, that hath all the Members, but all these Members have one time or other acted and brought forth Fruit unto Death: How vile then must you be in God's Sight? It is a strange love that you have to your selves, that you cannot apprehend how God can hate you? But if He find Sin in you, wonder rather how He can look upon you: We would then have you to know this, That there can be no Fellowship between God and you in your Natural Estate: As Men cannot inhabit a vile Person's House, no more can God enter into your Souls. There is an absolute necessity of washing, before you can be His House and Temple. Hath that one Sin of *Adam* made that Glorious Person so deformed, that he could not look on himself, but cover himself? And hath it been of so defiling a Nature, that it hath redounded in all the Posterity? And as unclean things under the Law, defiled all they touched, so hath that Sin subjected all the Creatures to Corruption? O then imagine what an unspeakable defilement must be on us all, who are not only guilty of *Adam's* Sin, but of many thousands besides.

beside? If one Sin have so much loathsomness in it, what must so many out of number, united in one Person, even as in us all? *No unclean thing can enter into Heaven above:* Know this for a truth, you cannot see God's Face in the Case you are born into. You know nothing of Sin, who wonder that any should go to Hell. No, if you knew any thing of Sin, you would wonder that ever God should look on such cast out in the open Field, in their Blood.

Next, you must know the insufficiency of all things imaginable, to wash away Sins filthiness, except the Blood of Christ. Since you are unclean, do you not ask, How shall we be washed? Indeed many have an easie answer, and pass it lightly. The Multitude know no way to cleanse in, but the Tears of Repentance and Mourning; And so, many think themselves clean, when they run and pour out a Tear as *Esaú* did for the blessing. But what saith the Lord? *Tho' thou wash thee with Nitre, and take thee much Sope, yet thine Iniquity is marked.* Can such an ingrained uncleanness, can such an infinite spot in the Immortal Soul, be so lightly dashed out? Many think Baptism cleanseth them, but was not this People Circumcised, as ye are Baptized? And *Peter* tells us, it is not the washing of Water, *1 Peter 3. 21.* Sacrifice and Offering will not do it: This People thought sure they had satisfied God, when they brought a Lamb, &c. but all this is abomination. Would not many of you think yourselves cleansed from Sin, if you offered all your Substance, and the Fruit of your Body for the Sin of your Soul? Nay, but you must see an absolute necessity of the opened Fountain, of Christ's Blood, that cleanseth from all Sin.

Then we would have you abhorre your selves in Dust and Ashes, see nothing in all the Creation so vile as you; Look on Sin in the Sight of God's Face, and how unholy will it appear? There are many Sins, little ones, that in our Practice pass for venial and uncontrolled: But look on the filthy loathsome

loathsome Nature of all Sin, and hate the least Offence, for it hath a kind of infiniteness in it, and blotterh the Soul, defileth the Person. How great a necessity is there of continual application to the Fountain, of dwelling beside it, that you may wash daily? *David's* so often repeated, and inculcated Prayer, *Wash me, cleanse me, &c.* Psal. 51. Declareth that he hath apprehended much uncleanness in Sin, that it needeth so many Applications of the Precious Blood. And you who have come to Jesus, and are clean, O how much owe you to Free-grace, that pass by you in your Blood, and said, *Live, it is a Time of Love?* How strange is it, that Glorious Majesty cometh to own Deformity, and cometh to clothe it with His own Garments! Praise the Vertue of that Blood, that is more Precious nor the Blood of Bulls and Goats, that can so thoroughly purge, as you shall have no more Conscience of Sin.

Unclean Sinners, wash you, make you clean, there is a Fountain opened, tho' Sin were as Scarlet, it can perfectly change the Colour of it. If you wash not while the Fountain is opened, it will quickly be sealed on you, and then it shall be said, *when the Angel sweareth by Him that liveth for ever, That Time shall be no more;* then shall it be said, *Let him that is unclean, be unclean still.* Now cleansing is offered in the Gospel, if you will love your loathsomness so well, as not to dip your selves in this Fountain, then let the unclean be so still: Your Repentance will never change your Colour, though you should melt in Sorrow. And therefore you who have found a way to be saved otherways nor by Jesus Christ, you shall be deceived: Your Tears and Mourning that you might have had, though Christ had never come into the World, is all you use to speak of, and build your Hope on: And if you speak of Christ, it is in such terms as to buy him by such Repentance, so that the Truth is, You use but Christ's Name as a shadow, you make no use of Him: He needed not to have come into the

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the World, for many of you could have done as well without Him. But as many of you as cannot find cleansing, who see filth increase by washing, come to Christ Jesus, and say, *If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.* Matth. 8. 2. Nothing beside Jesus can do it, believe His Sufficiency; nothing beside Him will do, believe His Willingness; for, for this Cause He is an opened Fountain, that all may come and draw.

S E R M O N XVI.

Isa. 64. 6, 7. ----- All our righteousnesses are as filthy Rags, and we all do fade as a Leaf, and our Iniquities like the Wind, have taken us away.

Not only are the direct Breaches of the Command Uncleaness, and Men Originally and Actually unclean, but even our Holy Actions, our Commanded Duties: Take a Man's Civility, Religion, and all his universal inherent Righteousness, all are filthy Rags: And here the Church confesseth nothing, but what God accuseth her of, *Isa. 64. 3. and Chapter 1. Ver. 11, 12, 13, &c.* This People was much in Ceremonial and External Duties, and therefore they cried, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord,* as if this would have outcried all their other Sins; Therefore were they Proud, and Lords in their own Estimation, and Innocent, *Jer. 2. 31, 35.* They thought the many good Services they did to God, might compensate all their wrongs, *Micah 6. 6, 7.* They gave a price to Justice for their Sins, even a confession of it by offering a Lamb, &c. and a purpose to amend. But lo, what sense the Prophet hath of all this, *Lord, all our righteousness is filthy likewise?* Albeit we have paid the Debt of Sins with Duties, yet now we

we see all these are Sins themselves, and must have another Sacrifice; so that all matter of boasting is now removed, and we are stript naked of all righteousness: We covered our filthiness before, with Duties, now both the one and the other is filthy. We would look upon two sorts of righteousnesses, the Natural Mans, and the Converted Mans, upon the ones Civility and fair Profession, and upon the others Real or True Grace in discharge of Duties, and we shall find good reason to conclude both the one and the other under filthiness; so that there is no ground of boasting, no inherent righteousness can make us accepted before God.

First then, whatever Men can do from Natural Principles, all the flower and perfection of Mens Actions, both Civil and Religious, is but abominable before God, as long as their Persons are unjustified. Every Performance is defiled by the Uncleaness of the Person. And therefore *God heareth not Sinners*, John 8. That is unjustified Sinners, tho' they pray much, yet God heareth them nor. And this is lively expressed by *Haggai*, Hag. 2. 12, 13, 14. As the Priests Holy Garments and Flesh could not make Bread or Pottage holy, but the unclean Body could make these unclean; So this Nations and Peoples Performances and Holy Duties, could not make them Holy, and their Persons clean; But their unclean Persons and Actions made all their Performances unclean: The Solemn Meeting and Sacrifice, &c. could not make them accepted, but their unclean Persons, made their Solemn Meetings and Religious Duties vile and abominable in God's sight: And thus to the unclean all things are unclean, even their Mind and Conscience, Titus 1. 15. The unbelieving Man who is born unclean, and defiled with so much Original Corruption, and so many Actual Transgressions, defileth all things he toucheth; As a Dead Body, or a Leperous Garment under the Law, made all unclean it touched, and nothing could make it holy by touching of it. So all your Civility, all your Profession will never contribute to
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 out of rotten *Adam*, into the True Vine Jesus, it is
 such Fruit only that can be acceptable: Therefore
 until you be sprinkled with clean Water, and made
 clean according to the New Covenant-way, you
 cannot please God. Believe this, your Sins and
 your Duties are one, your Oaths and your Prayers
 are in the same account with God. What have you
 then to build upon, when all this is removed? You
 must once be stript naked of all Coverings; and
 will not your nakedness then be great? The Pha-
 risee went away unjustified, and the poor repenting
 sinner justified. What was the reason? There are
 not many of you have such a fair venture for Hea-
 ven as he had; so many Prayers, Fasting, Alms,
 to ground your Hope on. Nay, but all this would
 never justify his Person, because once he was un-
 clean, come of *Adam*, and had contracted more un-
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 defiling all that cometh near it; So that whatever
 hath any dependence on a Son of *Adam*, must con-
 tract filthiness. Now I ask your Consciences, have
 you so many specious Coverings to adorn your selves
 with? Is not your Out-side spotted, and not so
 clean, as the Young Civil Man, and the Religious
 Pharisee? Certainly no, and yet have you no other
 ground to plead the acceptation of your Persons up-
 on, but only this, your Prayers and Tears, or some
 such Duty performed by you? Well, all is Un-
 cleanness, since your Persons were once unclean, no
 Hope nor Nitre can wash it, no Holy-flesh make it
 holy, no Good-wishes nor Duties can make it ac-
 ceptable. Did not this People think of their Duties
 as much as you do? And had more reason so to
 do; for our Congregations have not so much form
 of Godliness as they had, and yet God solemnly
 protesteth to them, that all their works were defiled,
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even these which they took to wash themselves with; so your Repentance and Tears must be as filthy, as the Sin you would wash by it.

Secondly, The Uncleaness of Mens Practice maketh unclean Performances, *Unclean Hands, make unclean Prayers*, Isa. 1. 15. When Men go on in Sin, and use their Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness against God, and Guiltiness is above their Head unrepented of, and unpardoned, then whatever the Members Act for God in Religious Duties, it must be also abominable, for will God take Prayers from such a Mouth, that Cursing cometh out of? *Isa. 3. 10, 11, 12.* Shall sweet Water come out of one Fountain with bitter? Or can a Fig-tree bear both Thistles and Grapes? Certainly, profane Conversation must make unclean Profession. And therefore your coming to the Church and Ordinances, your Praying in your Families, or such like, must of necessity be defiled, since out of the same Mouth cometh Cursing, Railing, Lying, filthy Speeches: Your Tongues are so often employed in God's dishonour, to Blaspheme His Name, to Slander your Neighbours, to Reproach the Saints, that all your Prayers must be of the same stamp, and as bitter as the other Stream of your Actions: When you stretch forth your Hands to make many Prayers, to take the Bread and Wine, shall not God hide His Face from such Hands, as are unclean with many abominations, some Murdering, some abusing their Neighbours, some Sabbath-breaking, some Filthiness, how oft have your Hands and Feet served you to evil turns? And therefore your good turns will never come in remembrance. Nay, believe it, you cannot be heard of God while you cover any Offence. And this I may say in general, even to the Saints; any known Sin given way to, and entertained without controlment, without wrestling against it, hindreth the acceptation of your solemn approaches. *If your Heart regard Iniquity, shall God hear?* Psal. 66. 18. No, believe it, the least Sin that you may judge at first venial, and then

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then give it toleration and indulgence, shall sepa-
 rate between God's Face and you: Your Prayers
 are abomination, because of such an Idol perked up
 in the Heart beside God, that getteth the Honour and
 Worship due to him, and God must answer you ac-
 cording to it, *Ezek. 19. 1, 3, 4.* God will not be
 inquired of such as give allowance to Sin, *Ezek. 14.*
1, 3, 4. And on the other hand, no Sin how great
 and hainous soever can hinder God's gracious ac-
 ceptation, when Souls flee unto Jesus, and turn their
 back upon Sin, or giveth it no Heart-allowance:
 And to the Multitude, I say, all that you do or
 touch in a Duty must be defiled, because your whole
 way is unclean, *Hag. 2. 12, 13, 14.* Think you to
 sin all the Week thorow, and Worship God on the
 sabbath? Will you Lie, Swear, commit Adultery,
 Rail and Curse, and come and stand before Me, saith
 the Lord? No certainly, you cannot be accepted;
 and will you hate Reformation in your Lives, and
 yet take His Covenant in your Mouth, and call your
 selves by His Name, *Christians*? And shall not God
 challenge you for that as much, as for your Swear-
 ing, and Cursing, and Lying? &c. Indeed the
 Lord putteth all in one Roll, and you need not please
 your selves in such things, *Psal. 50. 16. Jer. 9. 9,*
10. For it is all one to you to go to Tavern to
 drink, and come to the Sermon, to blaspheme God's
 Name, and call on it, because the profanity of the
 one defileth the other, and the holiness of the other
 cannot make you holy.

Thirdly, The Natural Man's Performances want
 the uprightness, reality and sincerity that is requir-
 ed, it is but a painted Tomb, full of rottenness with-
 in, it is but a shadow without substance, for he
 wanteth the Spiritual part of Worship, which
 God careth for, *who will be worshipped in Spirit and*
truth, John 4. 24. Now what is it that the most
 part of you can speak of, but an out-side of some
 few Duties, soon numbred? You hear the Preach-
 ing, and your Hearts wander about your Business:
 You hear, and are not so much affected, as you
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would be to hear some old Story, or Fable told you: A Stage-play acted before this Generation, would move them more than the Gospel doth: So that Christ may take up this Lamentation, *We have Piped to you, and you have not Danced, Lamented to you, and you have not Mourned.* You use to tell over some words in your Prayers, and are not so serious in any approach to God, as in twenty other things of the World. Whatever you plead of your Hearts rightness, and have recourse to it, when your Conversation cannot defend you, yet your Hearts are the worst of all, and have no uprightness towards God; for you know that what Duties you go about, it is not from an inward Principle, but from Education or Custom, or Constraint. Are you upright, when you are forced for fear of Censure to come here, or to pray at home? Is that Sincerity and Spiritual Worship? And for the more polished and refined Professors, you have this Moth in your Performances, and this Flie to make your Ointment to stink, that you do much to be seen of Men, therefore what little fervour of Spirit is in Secret Duties? There you may measure your Altitude and your Life. And O how wearisome, how lifeless are secret approaches? you would not have many Rewards to God, if you thought no Body looked upon you. And for Spirituality, it is a Mystery in all Mens Practice: Who directeth his Duty to God's Glory? If you get some flash of liberty, you have your desire; But who misseth God's Presence in Duties, which a World will approve? Who go Mourning as without the Sun, even when you have the Sun-shine of Ordinances, and walketh in the Light of them?

And *Fourthly*, Tho' your Performances had uprightness of Heart going alongst, and much Affection in them, yet all are filthy, because of want of Faith in Jesus Christ. When you make your Duties a Covering of your Sins, and think to satisfy God's Justice for the rest of your Faults, by doing some point of your Duty, then it cannot choose

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but be polluted in His Sight. And this very thing was the cause of God's rejecting the *Jews* righteousness, even because they did not look to the end of the Mystery, *Christ Jesus*: Did not pull by the Vail of Ceremonies, to see the Immaculat Lamb of God slain for Sin. And therefore doth the Lord so quarrel with them, as if He had never commanded them to do such things, Isa. 1. 12, 13. *Who hath required these things at your Hands? Bring no more vain Oblations, all is abomination.* Even as God should say to you, when you come to the Church, Who required you to come? Who commanded you to come to hear the Preaching? What have you to do to Pray? What warrand have you to Communicat? All your Praying, Hearing, Communicating, is abomination; who commanded you to do these things? Would you not think it a foolish Question? You would soon Answer, That God Himself commanded you, and will He not let us do His bidding. Indeed this People (no doubt) have said so in their Heart, and wondred what it meant. Nay, but here is the Mystery, you go about these commanded Duties not in a commanded way, and so the Obedience is but Rebellion: You bring Offerings and Incense, and think that I am pacified when you bring Alms, you judge you have given Me a recompence, whereas, all that is mine, and what pleasure have I in these things? I never appointed you Sacrifices for this end, but to lead you into the Knowledge of my Son, which is to be slain in the fulness of time, *and by one Offering to perfect all.* I commanded you to look on Jesus Christ slain, on the slain Lamb, and so to expect Remission and Salvation in Him; But you never looked to more nor the Ceremony, and made that your Saviour and Mediator: And therefore it is all abomination: When you slay a Lamb, and offer Incense, it is all one thing, as to cut off a Dog's Neck, or kill a Man; So may the Lord say to this Generation, I command you to Pray, to Repent and Mourn

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Mourn for Sin; to come and hear the Word, but withall you must deny all these, and count yourselves unprofitable Servants, you must singly cast your Souls burthen on Christ Jesus. But now, (saith the Lord) who commanded your Repentance, for when you sit down to Pray, or come in Publick to confess Sin before the Congregation, you think you are washen; When you have said, You have Sinned, and if you come to the length of Tears and Sorrow, Oh then sure you are pardoned, tho' in the mean time you have no thought of Jesus Christ, and knoweth no use of Him. Therefore, saith the Lord, Who commanded you to do these things? You think you have satisfied for your Sin, when you pay a Penalty, but who requireth this? I will reckon with you for these, as well as the Sins you pray and mourn for, because you do not singly look to Christ Jesus. Now, if He had never come to the World, your ground of confidence would not fail you; For you might have prayed as much, mourned and confessed, and promised amendment, and so you pass by the Son of God, in whom only the Father is well pleased. Think then upon this, whatever you make your righteousness, there needeth no other thing to make it filthy, but to make it your righteousness: Your confidence in your good Heart to God, prayer Day and Night, and such like, is the most loathsome thing in God's Eyes: Except you come to this, to count your Prayers, as God doth, among your Oaths, to count your Solemn Duties, among profane scandalous Actions, as the Lord doth, *Isa* 1. and 66.3. Then certainly, you do adorn yourselves with them, and cover your nakedness of other faults, with such leaves as *Adam* did, but you shall be more discovered; Your Garment is as filthy, as that it hideth, even because you make that use of it to hide your Sin, and cover it.

Next, the Lord's Children have no ground of boasting either, from their own righteousness; The holiest Saint on Earth must abhor himself in Dust and Ashes, and Holy *Isaiah* joyneeth himself in with
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a profane People: When he cometh to God to be justified, he cometh among the ungodly, he bringeth no righteousness with him, he cometh in among them that work not. Now you shall find good ground why it must be so. *First*, There are ordinarily many Blemishes in our Holiest Actions, Spots on our clearest Garment, often Formality eateth up the Life of Duties, and presenteth a Body without a Soul in it: You sit down to pray out of custom, Morning and Evening: And if there were no more to prove it, this may suffice; When pray you, but at such times? You have an ordinar, and goeth not by it, no advantage is taken of Providence, no necessity constraineth when occasion offereth; and so it is like the Worlds appointed Hours. How great deadness and indisposition creepeth in, so that it is the ordinary complaint, yea, all prayers filled with it, scarcely any room for other Petitions, because of the want of Frame for Prayer it self: The Word is heard as a Discourse, and on whom hath it Operation to stir up Affections, either of Joy, or of Trembling? Christians, you come not to hear God speak, and so you meet with empty Ordinances, God is not in them. How often do crooked and sinister ends creep in, and byass the Spirit? Men ask to spend on their Lusts, and to satiate their own Ambition; Some would have more Grace to be more Eminent, or to have a more pleasant Life; And this is but the seeking to spend on your Lusts. If Affection run in the Channel of a Duty, it is often muddy, and runneth thorow our Corruptions: Liberty in Duties is principled with Carnal Affection and Self-love. Will not often the Wind of Applause in Company, fill the Sails, and make your Course swifter and freer, nor when you are alone? And often much love to a particular, maketh more in seeking it. And that which is a Moth to eat up and consume all our Duties, is Conceit and Self-confidence in going about them, and attributing to our self after them. It is true very

rare, that any Man both Acteth from Jesus Christ as the Principle, and also putteth over his Work on Christ singly as the End. Alas! too often do Men draw out of Christ's Fulness, and raise up their own glory upon it, and adorn themselves with the spoils of His Honour; For we use to pray from a habit of it, and go to as Men acquainted with it, and when we get any satisfaction to our own Minds, O how doth the Soul return on it self, and goeth not forward as it goeth! It is so well pleased with it self, when it getteth liberty to approach, that it doth not put all over on Jesus, and take shame to it self. As long as there is a Body of Death within, Holiness cannot be pure and unmixed; Our Duties run thorow a dirty Channel, and cannot choose but contract filth; While Sin lodgeth under one roof so near Grace, Grace must be in its exercise marred, and therefore the Holy Apostle must cry, Rom. 7. 19. *The Good that I would, I do not; but the Evil which I would not, that I do.* And Verse 24. *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death!*

Secondly, Tho' there were not such Blemishes, and Spots in the Face of our Righteousness, yet it is here in a State of Imperfection, and but in its Minority, and so must be Filthy in the Lord's Sight. It was Perfect Holiness according to the Perfect Rule of God's Law, that *Adam* was to be Justified by, according to the Covenant of Works, exact Obedience, not one wanting, or else all that can be done, came short of Righteousness. One Breach bringeth the Curse on. All Obedience (if there be a failing in a little) will not bring the Blessing on. He that doth all, liveth; and he that doth not all, is cursed. And therefore Christians, all you do cannot commend your Persons to God, for if He Examine you by the Rule of the Law, O how short will the Holiest come? *Paul* and *Isaiah* dare not come in such a reckoning; Neither is all obeyed, nor any in the measure and manner commanded. And therefore, you might cry down

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all your Performances, when you could challenge them with no particular blot, with this, All is short of the Command, and infinitely short. I have been aiming at Holiness so long, I have stretched out my Strength, and what have I attained? It may be, I have outstripped equals, and there seemeth to be some distance between me and others; Nay, but the Command is unspeakably more before me, nor I am before others. I have reached but a Span of that boundless Perfection of Holiness; It is but a Grain-weight of the Eternal weight of Grace, and I must forget it, and stand before God, as if I had lost mind of Duties, appear in His Presence, as if I attained nothing; for the length that is before my Hand, drowneth up all Attainments.

Thirdly, Nay, but put the Case Man were perfect, yet should he not know his Soul, but despise his Life? The Lord putteth no trust in his Servants, and his Angels he chargeth with folly, and the Heavens are not clean in his Sight, how then must Man be abominable, that hath his Foundation in the Dust, and drinketh in Iniquity like Water? How should God magnifie him? Or he be righteous that is born of a Woman? Job 25. 4, 6. and 15. 14, 15. and 4. 18, 19. Job was a great length in the fight of his own Vileness, and God's Holiness, when he saw this, *Tho' I were perfect, yet I would not know it, but despise it, I would not answer him, tho' I were righteous*, Chap. 9. 14, 15, 21. So unspeakably pure and clean is His Holiness, that all created Holiness hath a Spot in it before His, and evanisheth, as the Stars disappear when the Sun riseth, which seem something in the darkness. The Angels Holiness, the Heavens Glory, is nothing to Him, *before whom the Nations are as nothing*; so that it is all the wonder of the World, that ever God stooped so far below Himself, even to righteous Adam, as to make such a Covenant with him, to account him righteous in Obedience. *What is Man that thou should magnifie him? When I look to the Heavens, and the Sun, the work of thine Hands, Lord, what is Man?*

What is Innocent Man in his Integrity, that thou should magnifie him, to give him a place to stand before thee, magnifie him to be a party contracter with thy Glorious Majesty? *Psal. 8. 4, 5, 6.* But now when this Covenant is broken, it is become impossible to a Son of *Adam*, ever to stand before God in his perfection, for *how should Man be righteous that is born of a Woman?* *Job 14, 15.* Since we once Sinned, how should our Righteousness ever come in remembrance? Therefore hath God chosen another way to cover Man's Wickedness and Righteousness both, with His own Righteousness, His Sons Divine-humane Righteousness, which is so suited in His Infinite Wisdom for us: It is a Man's Righteousness, that it may agree with Men, and be a fit Garment to cover them; It is God's Righteousness, that it may be beautiful in God's Eyes, for He seeth His own Image in it. And it is not the created inherent righteousness of Saints glorified, that shall be their upper Garment, that shall be their Heaven and Glory-suit, (so to speak,) they will not glory in this, but only in the Lamb's Righteousness for evermore. Saint-holiness must have a covering above, for it cannot cover our nakedness: And all the Songs of them that follow the Lamb, make mention of His Righteousness, even of His only. The Lamb is the Light and Sun of the City, the Lamb is the Temple of it; In a word, He is all that is Beautiful and Glorious: Every Saint hath put on the Lord Jesus, and is perfect thorow His comeliness: At least, if the Holiness of Spirits of just Men made perfect, be the glorious habit above; yet all the beauty and glory of it is from Christ Jesus, whose Image it is, and the Spirit whose work it is. It shall be still true, All our righteousness, as ours, is filthy, and all holiness, as it hath a relation to us, cannot please God, it must be spotted before His pure Eyes, but only it is accepted and clean, as it is Christ's and the Spirits, as it is his own Garment put upon us, and his own Comeliness making us perfect. It is not so much the

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inherent cleanness of the Saints Robes that maketh them beautiful in his Eyes, as this, *That they are washed in the Blood of the Lamb*, Rev. 7. 14.

Now from all this we would speak a word to two sorts of you: There is one great Point of Religion that is the Principal and Foundation of all other, even Free Justification by Faith in Jesus, without our own righteousness. And the most part stumble here in the entry: It is the greatest obstruction of Souls coming to Christ Jesus, even the ignorant and blind conceit and fancy that almost every Man hath of himself, and his own Performances: The World will not make many believe the half of the Evil of themselves, that is spoken in the Word. If you have a general conviction of sinfulness and misery, yet you think to help it. If you sin, you use to make an amends, run to your Prayers, and Repentance, to give God a recompense, and satisfy your own Consciences: Speak now, is not this the way you think to be saved? I shall do what I can, pray and mourn for Sin, and what I am not able to do, God must forgive, you will do all you are able, or can, and God's Mercy must come in to supply the want of your righteousness; But this is to put a new piece of Cloth in an old Garment, to make the rent worse: Many of you have no other ground of confidence in the World, nothing to answer the challenge of Conscience, or satisfy Justice but this, I repent, I am sorry, I mourn, I shall amend, I resolve never to do the like again. Now then from this ground we would declare unto you in the Lord's Name, you are yet unclean, both in Persons and Actions unjustified, because you have no other covering but your own Duties and Performances: And let these be examined, and weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary, and they will be found light. *All your righteousness* (saith the Lord) *is filthiness*: You are unclean, you cannot deny, both by Birth and Education, you have often defiled yourselves with Sin, you must confess: Now I ask you, How will you cover that uncleanness and

Nakedness? How will you hide it from God's Eyes, and your own Conscience? You know no way but this, I will Pray, I will Repent, and Amend. So then you cover your self with Prayer, with Sorrow and Tears, and a Resolution of amending, this then is all your Covering and Ornament, something done by you; as many will make the wings of two good works stretch themselves out so far, as to cover and hide a multitude of Offences between them. Therefore I declare in the Lord Jesus His Name unto you, whose Conscience must go alongst in the acknowledgement and owning of your Case, that you have covered your selves with your own righteousness, that you have taken as filthy Rags to cover your Nakedness and Sin with, as your Sins are, and so, you have made an addition to your uncleanness, you are more unclean by your Prayers and Repentance than before: And so God is of more pure Eyes, than to look graciously on such as you are. You have gone about to establish your own righteousness, and hath not known the Righteousness of God, and so you have come short of it; you are yet Persons in a State of Enmity, God is your Judge, you are Rebels: It concerns you much to heed this well, to judge of your own Actions and Persons as God judgeth of them, for if God shall judge one way, and you judge another way, you may be far mistaken in the end. If you have so good an opinion of your selves, and your Duties, that you can plead Interest in God for them, and absolve your selves from such grounds: And if God have not the same Judgement, but rather think as evil of your Prayers, as of your Cursing, and abhorre the thing that satisfieth you, will it not be dreadful in the end? For His Judgement shall stand, and you will succumb in Judgement, since you crossed God's Mind. Therefore we would have you solidly drink in this Principle of Religion, That Man is so unclean, and God so abhorreth him, that whatever he doth, or can do, it cannot make him Righteous, that no good

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Action can make him acceptable, and take away the Uncleanneſs of the Evil Actions; and that any Sinful Action taketh away all the Cleannesse of the Good Actions. Once believe this, If I should sweat out my Life in Serving God, and never rise off my Knees, If I should give my Body to the Fire for the Truth, If I should melt away in Tears for Sin, all this is but filthy Rags, and I can never be accepted of God for all that, but the matter of my Condemnation groweth: If I justify my self, my own Mouth proves me perverse: God needeth no more but my good deeds to condemn me for, in all justice: And therefore it is a thing impossible, I will never put forth a Hand, or open a Mouth upon that account any more. I will serve God, because it is my Duty, but Life I will not expect by my Service, when I have done all, it is wholly Mercy that I am accepted; My good works shall never come in remembrance, I resolve to be found, not having my own Righteousness, I will appear among the Ungodly Sinners, as one that hath no righteousness, that I may be justified only by Faith in Jesus Christ. I say, drink in this truth, and let it settle in your Hearts, and then we would hear numbers cry, *O what shall I do to be Saved?*

Now as for you who have fled unto Christ's Righteousness only, and have cast away your own as Dung and Dross, as filthy Rags, as you have done right in the Point of Justification, judge so likewise after it. We would exhort you to judge so of your best Actions that are the Fruits of the Spirit, judge so of them as you have a hand in them.

All our righteousness] Mark, *Isaiah* a Holy Prophet joyneth himself in with the Multitude. And the Truth is, the more Holiness, the more Humility and Self-abasing; for what is Holiness, I pray you, but Self-denial, the abasing of the Creature, and exalting of Christ Jesus. This is the Cross that the Saints must all bear, *Deny your self, and follow me.* Grace doth not swell Men above others, it is Gifts,

such as Knowledge that puffeth up; Charity or Love puffeth not up. Men are naturally High-minded, for Pride was the first Sin of *Adam*, and Grace cometh to level Men, to make the high Mountains Valleys for Christ's Chariot; It maketh Men stoop low to enter the Door of the Kingdom. Therefore if you have attained any measure beyond others, if you would prove it Real Grace and Holiness, do not exalt your selves above others; be not High-minded, come down and sit among the ungodly, among the unclean, and let not Grace given diminish the low estimation of your self in your self: There is a growing that is but a Fancy, and Mens Conceit, when Men grow above Ordinances, above other Christians, and can see none or few Christians but themselves, such a growth is not real, it's but fancy, it's but swelling and wind, and must be pricked to let it out. A Holy Prophet came in among an unclean People, he did not say, *Stand by, I am Holier than thou*. Such a Man as can find no Christian about him, even tho' to the judgement of all others, they seek God more than he, such a Man hath not real solid Grace, his Holiness is profane Holiness, and proud Holiness; for True Holiness is Humble Holiness, and in Honour preferreth others.

There is a great Fault among those who have fled to Christ's Righteousness in Justification, that they use to come full from Duties, as a Stomach from a Honey-comb. Oft-times we make our liberty and access to God, the ground of our acceptation, and according to the ebbs and flowings of our inherent righteousness, so doth the Faith and Confidence of Justification ebb and flow. Christians, this ought not to be. In so doing, you make your own righteousness your righteousness before God: For when the unsatisfaction in the Point of Duty, maketh you question your Interest so often, is not the satisfaction of your Mind in Duties, made the ground of your pleading Interest? Give you liberty and access, you can believe any thing, remove

it, and you can believe nothing. Certainly this is a Sandy Foundation, you ought to Build nothing on Performances, you should be as vile in your own Eyes, and think your Nakedness as open, when you come nearest God, when you have most liveliness, as when he hideth his Face, and Duty withereth; will filthy Rags be your Ornament? No Christians, be more acquaint with the unspotted Righteousness of the Immaculat Lamb of God, and find as great necessity of covering your clearest Duties with it, as your foulest Faults, and thus shall you be kept still humble and vile in your own Eyes, and have continual employment for Christ Jesus: Your best Estate should not puff you up, and your worst Estate should not cast you down. Therefore be much in the search of the filthiness of your Holy Actions; This were a Spiritual Study, a noble discovery to unbowel your Duties, to divide them, and give unto God what is Gods, and take unto your selves what is your own: The discovery of filthiness in them, needeth not hinder his Praise; And the discovery of Grace in them, needeth not mar your shame. God hath most Glory when we have most Shame, these two grow in just proportion, so much is taken from God, as is given to the Creature.

Thirdly, We would also press you from this ground, to long much to be clothed upon with Immortality, to put off the filthy Rags of Time, and Earth-righteousness, and to be clothed upon with the White-robes of the Righteousness of the Saints. As you would dwell near the Fountain here, and be still washing your Garments, and offering all your Sacrifices in Him who Sanctifieth all, so would you pant and thirst for this spotless Garment of Glory: Glory is nothing but perfect Holiness, Holiness washen and made clean in the Lamb's Blood: Your Rags are for the Prison and for Sojourning: When you come to your Father's House, your Raiment shall be changed. Therefore Christians, every one of you aspire higher, sit not down in Attainments,

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forget what is behind, and press forward: Let perfect Holiness be in your Eye and Purpose, sit not behind it: All our Time-duties have much filthiness; long for the pure Stream that waters the City above: Grace is not in its native place, it is corrupted and mixed here: Heaven is the own Element of it, and there is Grace without mixture. Undervalue all your Performances, till you be above, where that which is in part, shall be done away, where no unclean thing entreth.

Fourthly, This likewise holdeth out to you a continual necessity of washing. You must take up House beside the Fountain opened in the House of David; and never look on any piece of inherent righteousness, but see a Necessity of dipping it in the Lamb's Blood. And therefore should you pray always in Christ's Name, that the prayer which of it self, would be cast as dung on our Face, may have a sweet savour from Him. Cover your Holiness with Christ's Righteousness, and make mention of it only.

S E R M O N XVII.

Isa. 64. 6. ----- And we all do fade as a Leaf, and our Iniquities, like the Wind, have taken us away.

Here they joyn the Punishment with the deserving Cause, their Uncleaness and their Iniquities, and so take it upon them, and subscribeth to the Righteousness of God's dealing.

We would say this much in General, *First*, No Body needeth to quarrel God for His dealing. *He will always be justified when He is judged.* If the Lord deal more sharply with you than with others, you may judge, there is a difference between your Condition.

Condition and theirs, as well as in the Lord's Dispensation, even as this People do, *verse 5, 6.* It is a strange saying, Lam. 3. 31. *The Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.* That is, (as we conceive,) the Lord hath not such pleasure in trampling on Men, as He might do on the Dust of His Feet: Tho' He be absolute Sovereign Lord of the Creature, and Men be but as the Dust of His Feet, and He may do with His own what He pleaseth, and none ask, What do'st thou? Yet the Lord useth not to walk according to his own absoluteness, he hath another ordinary Rule whereby he worketh, a Rule of Justice and Equity; especially in the punishing of Men; He useth not to afflict Men for his pleasure, as Tyrants use to destroy their People. The Lord exerceth his Sovereignty another way, and if he be absolute and illimited in any thing, it is in shewing Mercy on Men: But in Judgement there may be still some Reason gotten for it in the Creature beside the Will of God; So that (to speak with reverence of His Majesty) Strokes are often drawn out of his Hands, He getteth so much provocation ere He strike, and holdeth off so long threatneth, and giveth warning thus before Strokes, as if it were against His will to lay on, as if His Heart were broken with us.

Secondly, If Men knew themselves and their own sinfulness, they would not challenge God with unrighteousness, but put their Mouth in the dust and keep silence. And it is from this ground, that this People do not charge God. Sin is of such infinite desert and merit, because against infinite Majesty, that God cannot go beyond it in punishment: And therefore *Jeremiah* when he is wading out of the deep Waters of sore Temptation and sad Discouragement, he pitcheth and casteth Anchor at this solid ground, *It is of the Lord's Mercy that we are not consumed,* Lam. 3. 22. What do I mean, thus to charge God, as if He dealt rigorously? No, no, It is His Mercy that a remnant is left, our Strokes are not pure Justice, our Cup is mixed, Mercy is the

the greatest part: Whatever is behind utter Destruction, whatever is below the desert of Sin, which is Hell and Damnation, all this must be reckoned up to Mercy: That I am yet alive, and so may have Hope, that is Mercy, *For why should a living Man complain?* verse 39. That a Rod is come to awake us out of Security, this is Mercy, for we might have slept to Death. And this wholesome Counsel got Job of his Friends to stay his Murmuring and Grudging at God's Dispensations, *Job 11. 6.* Why dost thou complain Job? Know but thy Sins, and there shall be no room for complaint; look but unto God's Secrets of Wisdom, and His Law, and see it is double to what you have known, your obligation is infinite more than you thought upon, and then how great and numberless must Iniquities be? *Know therefore,* saith Zophar, *God exacteth of thee less than thine Iniquities deserve,* God exacteth not according to Law, He graveth not according to the obligation, but bids write down Fifty in his Bill of Affliction, when an Hundred are written in our Bill of deserving. So then complain not, it is Mercy that Life is saved. Are you Men, and living Men? Wonder at this, and wonder not that you are not Wealthy, are not Honourable, seeing you are Sinners: All that came on *Jerusalem* maketh not *Ezra* think God out of bounds, *Chapter 9. 13.* As we are less than the least of God's Mercies, and all our goodness deserveth none of them; so is the least Sin greater than the greatest of all his Judgements, and deserveth still more: Nay, if there were no more but Original Corruption common to Men, and the filthiness that accompanieth Mens good Actions, yet is God Righteous in punishing severely, and this People acknowledge it so. You use to enquire what Sin hath such a Man done, when so Terrible Judgements come on? Nay, enquire no more, he is a Sinner, and it is Mercy, there is not more, and it is strange Mercy that it is not so with you also. You use to speak foolishly

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when God's Hand is upon you, I hope I have my Punishment here, I hope to suffer here for my Sins: Poor Souls, if God make you suffer for Sins, it will be another matter, tho' now your Punishment be above your Strength and Patience, yet it is below your Sin: As Sin hath all Evil in it, so must Hell have all Punishment in it: The torment of a Gravel, racking with the Stone, and such like, are but play to Hell, these are but drops of that Ocean, that you must drink out, and you shall go out of one Hell into a worse; Eternity is the measure of its continuance, and the degrees of it self are answerable to its duration. There is much impatience even among God's Children under the Rod: You vex and torment your selves, and doth well to be angry. Any piece of thwarting Dispensation, that goeth cross to your Humour and Inclination, imbibbers your Spirit against God, and maketh you go cross to His Providence: How often do your Hearts say, Why am I thus? What aileth the Lord at me? But Christians, learn to study your own deserving, and stop your Mouth with that, that you may not speak against Heaven. If you knew Sin well, you would not wonder at Judgements, you would rather wonder that you are out of Hell: Know what right God hath over you, and how little use He maketh of it against you: When you repine at a little, shall it not be Righteousness with God to exact more, and let you know your deserving better? He that thinketh it rigour in God to exact Fifty, it is Justice that God crave an Hundred. If the Law require fourty stripes, and he give but one, will you not rather commend and proclaim his Clemency, than speak of his Cruelty? Wonder that God hath spared us so long. Sin is come to great Maturity, as Pride is said to blossom and bud into a Rod, in all Sins are blossomed and budded into the very Harvest, that the Sickle may be put in. If we should have Cities desolate, and our Land consumed, if we should take up *Jeremiah's* Lamentation, and our Case be made parallel to theirs, we have

have then been punished less than our Iniquities deserved.

There are some Godless People so Black-mouthed, as to speak against Heaven when God Correcteth them, they follow the Counsel of *Job's Wife*, *Curse God and Die*, if God but touch them a little in that which is dearest unto them; they *kick against the Pricks*, and run Hard-heads with God. As we have known some foolish Women when their only Child hath been removed, blasphame, saying, What can God do more to me, let Him do what He can? O madness and wickedness of Men! Cannot God do more, when He casteth them into Hell? Thou shalt acknowledge that it is more. Some have left off to seek God, and turned profane, because of the Lord's Correction. But you would know, that all that is here is but Arles. If God had done His worst, you might think your selves out of His common, nay, but He hath yet more to do, the full sum is to be payed. It were therefore Wisdom yet to make Supplication to thy Judge.

But *Thirdly*, Sins and Iniquities have a great influence in the decay of Nations and Persons, and change of their outward Condition, when it is joyned with the Wind of God's Displeasure. The Calamity of this People is set down in excellent Terms, alluding to a Tree in the Fall of the Leaf: We (saith he) were once in our Land as a Green-tree busked round about with Leaves and Fruit: Our Church and State was in a Flourishing Condition, at least, nothing was wanting to make outward Splendour and Glory, we were immovable in our own Land, as *David* said in his Prosperity, *I shall never be moved*; So did we Dream of Eternity in Earthly *Canaan*. But now, Lord, we are like a Tree in the Fall of the Leaf: Sin hath obstructed the influence of Heaven, hath drawn away the Sap of Thy Presence from among us, so that we did fade as a Leaf before the fall. We were prepared so by our Sins for Judgement, visible draughts and prognosticks of it were to be read upon the Condition

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Condition and Frame of all Spirits and People: And then did our Iniquities raise the Storm of thy Indignation, and that like a Whirl-wind hath blown the withering Leaves off the Tree, hath driven us out of our own Land, and scattered us among Strangers. Sin and Uncleanneſs, and the ſlittineſs of our righteouſneſs prepared us for the Storm, made us light matter that could reſiſt no Judgement, made us matter combuſtible; And then Iniquities, and Sin riſing up to Iniquities, coming to ſuch a degree, hath accompliſhed the Judgement, put Fire among us, made us as the Birk in Yule-even.

First, It is familiar in the Scripture, that People in a prosperous condition are compared unto a *Green-tree flourishing*, *Pſal. 37. 35.* The wicked's prospering is like a *Green-bay-tree* ſpreading himſelf in power, ſpreading out his Arms (as it were) over moſt Lands to Conquer them, over moſt People to Subject them. And this is often the Temptation of the Godly, and ſo doth the Lord Himſelf witneſs of this People, *Jer. 11. 16. I have called thy name, A green Olive tree, fair and of goodly Fruit.* This was once their Name, tho' it be now changed. Now they are called a fading withering Tree, without both Leaves and Fruit. Now their Place doth not ſo much as know them, they are removed as in a Moment, *Pſal. 37. 36.* And this Compariſon giveth us to underſtand ſomething of the Nature of Humane Glory and Pomp. The faireſt and moſt beautiful excellency in the World, the Proſperity of Nations and People, is but like the glory of a Tree in the Spring or Summer: Yea, the Scripture uſeth to undervalue it more than ſo, and the Voice commandeth to cry, *Iſa. 40. 6, 7, 8. All Fleſh is Graſs, and the goodlineſs thereof as the Flower of the Field, the one withereth, and the other fadeth, becauſe the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. A Tree hath ſome Stability in it, but the Flower of the Field is but of a Month, or a Weeks ſtanding; Nay, of one Days ſtanding, for in the Morn-*
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ing the Grass is green, and the Sun scorceth it ere Night, so that one Suns course shall see it both growing green and fading: So is the goodliness, the very perfection, the quintessence (so to speak) and the abstract of Creatures Perfections: Outward accommodation in a World is as fading a thing as the Flower is, as Smoke is, it is so vanishing, that it bides but a puff of his Breath to blow it to nothing. Job hath a strange expression, *Thou looketh upon me, and I am not*, Job 7. 8. The Lord needeth no more but stare on the most durable Creature, and look it not only out of Countenance, but also look it into its first nothing, look it out of Glory, out of Being. And therefore you would not trust in these uncertain things, that can take Wings and leave you. When you have Accommodation outwardly to your Mind, do not build your Nest in it: These Leaves of Prosperity will not cover you always, there is a time when they will fall. Nations have their Winter and their Summer, Persons have them likewise; as these must change in Nature, so must they do in their Lot. Heaven only is one Day, one Spring perpetually blossoming and bringing forth Fruit: There is the Tree of Life that bringeth forth Fruit every Month, that hath both Spring and Harvest all the Year over. Christians, sit not down under the Green-tree of Worldly-prosperity; If you do, the Leaves will come down about you; The Gourd you trust in, may be eaten up in a Night: Your Winter will come on, so as you shall forget the former Days, as if they had never been. We desire you to be Armed for Changes: Are not Matters in the Kingdom still going about? All Things are subject to Revolution and Change, and every Year hath its own Summer and Winter; so hath it pleased the Lord to set the one over against the other, that Man might find nothing after Him, Eccles. 7. 14. Therefore we would have you cast your accounts so, as the former Days of Darknes may return, and the Land be covered with Mourning clothes.

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But would you know what is the Original of the Creatures Vanity, what is the Moth that eats up the Glory and Goodliness of Creatures Enjoyments? Here it is, *Sin and Iniquities*. It was Sin that first subjected the Creation to Vanity, *Rom. 8. 19, 20.* This inferiour World was to have been a durable House for an Immortal Soul, but Sin made Man Mortal, and the World Corruptible: And from this proceed all the Tempests and Disorders that seem to be in the Creation. It is this still: It is Sin that raiseth the Storm of the Lord's Wrath, which bloweth away the withered Leaves of Mens Enjoyments. Sin drieth up all the Sap and sweetness of the Creature-comforts, it maketh the Leaves of the Tree wither, drives the Sap away to the Root, hindreth the Influence of God's Blessing to come thorow the Veins of Worldly-prosperity: For what is the Vertue and Sap of Creatures? It is even God's Blessing, and therefore the Bread nourisheth not, but the Word and Command of God, *Matth. 3. 4.* That is a right unto the Creaturer by Jesus Christ, when possession of them is entered into by Prayer and Thanksgiving, for all right is sanctified by these, and it is the Iniquities of Men, that separateth between God and them, *Isa. 59. 2.* And when God is separated and divided from Enjoyments, they must needs be empty Shells and Husks, no Kernel in them, for *God filleth all in all, is all in all*; And remove Him, and you have nothing; your Meat and Drink is no Blessing, your Table is a Snare, your Pleasures and Laughter have Sadness in them, at least, they are like the vanishing blaze of Thorns under a Pot. And therefore when God is angry for Sin, *Mens Beauty consumeth as before the Moth*, *Psal. 39. 11.* When God began to shew Himself Terrible, because of Sin, poor Man, tho' of late spreading his Boughs out, yet all falleth, and like Ice melteth as before the Sun, which just now seemed as solid as Stone, O but David was sensible of this, and could speak from much experience, *Psal. 32. 3, 4.* *The Anger of the Lord did eat him up, and dried his Moisture.*

Moisture; It might be read in his Countenance, all the World could not content him, all the Showers of Creatures dropping Fatness could not keep Sap in him, God's displeasure scorseth so, nay, is within him, that no Hiding-place is to be found in the World, no Shadow of a Rock among all the Creatures in such a weary Land. *Moses* and the People knew this well, *Psal.* 90. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. The Lord's displeasure carried them away, as a Flood coming down carrieth all headlong with it, it scorseth them, and made them wither as Grass. When God setteth Iniquities before Him, that which is the Soul's secret, beginneth to imprint it in visible Characters on the Rod, and writeth his Sin on his Punishment, then no wonder that Days be spent in Vanity and Grief, since they are past over in His Wrath, *Job* 13. 25. Then doth a Soul loath its Dainty Meat, and then doth the Ox low over his Fodder, Meat is laid before, and he cannot touch it, because of the Terrors of the Almighty; And that which before he would not once touch, would not enter in terms of communing with, as the Lord's Threatnings, he must now sit down, and eat them up as his Meat, how sorrowful soever, *Job* 6. 3, 6, 7.

But *Secondly*, When Sin hath prepared a Man for Judgement, then if Iniquity be added to Sin, this raiseth the Storm, and kindleth the Fire to consume the combustible Matter: When Sin hath given many Blows by Preparatory Corrections at the Root of a Man's Pleasure and Credit, it will at length bring on a Fatal Stroke, that shall drive the Tree to the Ground. There are some Preparatory Judgements, and some Consummatory; some withers the Leaf, and some bloweth it quite off. Some make Men like the Harvest, ripe to put the Sickle of Judgement into it. The Corruption of a Land, the Universality of it, and Formality in worshipping of God, ripeneth a Land for the Harvest of Judgement, exposeth it to any Storm, leaveth it open to the Lord's Wrath; so that there is nothing

to hold His Hand, and keep off the Stroke. But when the Wind riseth, and Iniquities have made it tempestuous, then who may stand? It will sweep away Nations and People as a Flood, and make their Place not to know them; so that there shall be neither Leaf nor Branch left. There is often a great calm with great provocations, and Iniquities cry, *Peace, peace.* But when once the cry of it is gone up to Heaven, and hath engaged God's Anger against a People or Person, then it raiseth a Whirl-wind that taketh all away. Now all this belongeth to you, we told you the Acknowledgement of Sin was yours already, and a wonder it is that the Complaint is not ours also: Always this ought to be an Admonition and Example to us on whom the ends of the World are fallen. Therefore we would declare this unto you, That Sins and Iniquities have Judgement in the Tail. Now you sit at Peace, every one in his own Dwelling, and spread forth your Branches. But is there not much Uncleaness among you? We would have you trouble your Carnal Peace and Security, trouble your Ease with Thoughts of this. And we have ground to give this Warning, because if there were no more but the Iniquity of our Holy Things, the Formality of our Service, the commonness of Spirit in Worship, this might be enough to raise the Storm. You know not for what Reasons to be afraid of Judgement, look but on Original Corruption, look on the defilement of your Religious Actions, and then find ground sufficient of fading away. Tho' now you sit still and seem to be so settled, as you would never be moved: You Dream of an Eternity here, you cleave in your Hearts to your Houses and Lands: You stick as fast to the World, and will not part with it, as a Leaf to a Tree: Yet behold, the Wind of the Lord may arise, that shall drive you away, take your Soul from these things, and then whose shall they be? If you will not fear Temporal Judgements, yet I pray you fear Eternal, fear Hell. May not the Lord shake you off this Tree

Tree of Time, and take you out of the Land of the Living, to receive your Portion? There is not only an universal deadness of Spirit on the Land, but a profane Spirit, Iniquities, abominable Sins abound. Every Congregation is overgrown with Scandals; and for you, None may more justly complain: We are all unclean, Sin is not in Corners, but Men declare their Sin as Sodom. Sin is come to the Maturity, Defection and Apostacy is the Temper of all Spirits, and above all the general contempt and slighting of this Glorious Gospel, is the Iniquity of Scotland; so that we wonder that the withered Leaves yet stick to, that the Storm is not yet raised, and we blown away. Now you are like Stones, your Hearts as Adamants, and cannot be moved with His Threatnings, the Voice of the Lord's Word doth not once move you: You Sin, and are not afraid; Nay, but when God's Anger shall joyn with Iniquity, and the Voice of His Rod and Displeasure roar, this shall make the Mountains to tremble, the Rocks to move, and how much more shall it drive away a Leaf? You seem now Mountains, but when God shall plead, you shall be like the Chaff driven too and fro. O how easie a matter shall it be to God to blow a Man out of his Dwelling-place? Sin hath prepared you for it, he needeth no more but blow by his Spirit, or look upon you, and you will not be. You who now are Lofly and Proud, and maintain your self against the Word, when you come to reckon with God, and Heentreth into Judgement, you shall not stand: *You will consume as before the Moth: Your Hearts will fail you, Who may abide the Day of His coming?* It will be so Terrible, and so much the more Terrible, that you never Dreamed of it. If the Example of this People will not move you, do but cast your Eyes on Ireland, who all do fade as a Leaf, and their Iniquities have taken them away out of their own Land. Shall not the seeing of the Eye, nor the hearing of the Ear teach you? What Security do you promise to your selves?

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Have not we Sinned as much as they? Were not they His People as we? Certainly since God waiteth longer on you, the Stroke must be the greater: Provoked Patience must turn Fury. If you would then prevent this Peoples Complaint, go about such a Serious Acknowledgement of your Sins; *Search your ways, and turn again to the Lord.* And let not every Man sit down in a general notion of Sin, but unbowel it, untill you see uncleanness, go up to the Fountain-head, Original Corruption, go down to all the Streams, even the Iniquity of Holy Things: Let every Man be Particular in the Search of his own Provocations Personal, and every one be Publick in the General Sins of the Land, that you may Confess out of Knowledge and Sense, *We are all unclean, &c.*

S E R M O N XVIII.

Isa. 64. 7. And there is none that calleth upon Thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee, &c.

THEY go on in the Confession of their Sins: Many a Man hath soon done with that: A General Notion of Sin, is the highest Advancement in Repentance that many attain to. You may see here, Sin and Judgement mixed in thorough other in their Complaint: They do not so fix their Eyes upon their Desolate Estate of Captivity, as to forget their Provocations. Many a Man would spend more Affection, and be more pathetick in the Expression of his Misery when it is pungent, nor he can do when he speaketh of his Sins. We would observe from the Nature of this Confession something to be a Patern of your Repentance. And it is this,
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When the Spirit Convinceth, and Men are Serious in Repentance, then the Soul is more Searching, more Universal, more Particular in Acknowledgement of Sins. These are Characters of the Spirit's work. *First*, The Spirit discovereth unto Men, not only Sin, but the loathsomeness of Sin, its hateful Nature, how offensive it is to God's Holy Eye; Many of you know abundance of evil deeds, and call them Sins, but you have never taken up Sin's ugly Face, never seen it in the Glass of the Holy Law, uncleanness it self, because you do not abhorre your selves; Poor and low thoughts of God, maketh mean and shallow thoughts of Sin. You would be as *Job*, *Vile*, Chap. 40. 4. And *abhorre your selves in Dust and Ashes*, Chap. 42. 6. As God's Holiness grew great in your Eyes, Sins Uncleanness would grow proportionably, *Isa.* 6. 3, 5. And here your Repentance halteth in the very entry.

But *Secondly*, The Spirit discovereth not only the uncleanness of Mens Natures, and leadeth them up to Original Corruption, but the Spirit also leadeth Men alongst all the Streams, not only these that break out, but those who go under, ground, and have a more secret and subtil conveyance: It concludeth not only open Breaches of the Command under filthiness, but also all a Man's own righteousness, tho' never so refined, it concludeth it also a defiled Garment; so that the Soul can look nowhere but see Sin, and Uncleanness in its Ornaments and Duties. And thus it appeareth before God without such a Covering, openeth up its Soul, hideth not Sin with the Covering of Duties, but seeth a Necessity of another Covering for all. Now therefore let the most part of you conclude, that you have never yet gotten your Eyes open to see Sin, or confess it, because when you sit down to count your Sins, there are many things that you call not Sin, you use not to reckon your Praying and Repentance among Sins: Nay, because you have so much confidence in your Repentance and

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Confession, you have never Repented: You must see a Necessity of a Covering of Christ's Righteousness above all; Faith in Jesus must cover Repentance, and it self both, with the Glorious Object of it. But alas! how soon are many at an end of Confession? Some particular gross Actions may come in remembrance, but no more. Sum up all your Confessions, they have never yet pitched on the thousand part of your Guiltiness, no not in kinds, let be in number.

But *Thirdly*, The Spirit Convinceth Spiritually and Particularly both, it convinceth of Spiritual Sins, as we said last, of the Iniquity of Holy Things, and especially of the most Substantial Duties, Faith and Prayer, *John 16. 8. 9.* There are not many of you have come this length to see your want of Prayer. No, your own words do witness against you, for you use to say, I Pray Day and Night, I believe in God with all my Heart. Now therefore out of your own Mouth shall you be condemned, when the Spirit convinceth you of Sin, you will see no Faith, no Prayer at the first opening of the Eyes. But I add, there is no True Confession but it is particular, the Spirit useth not to bewilder Mens Spirits in a General Notion only, and a wild Field of unknown Sins: And such are many of your Convictions: You Mourn for Sin (as you say) and yet you cannot condescend on a particular that burdeneth your Conscience; you grant you have many Sins, but sit down to count them, and there is a short count of them. Now, do you not reflect back upon former Humiliations in Publick, and former Acknowledgements of Sins in Private? Do you not yet return upon your own Hearts to lay home this sad Challenge? I have never Repented, I do not yet Repent: Must not all your Solemn Approaches be Iniquity, and Abomination, while your Souls are not afflicted for Sin, while you can see so few Sins? &c. The Fasting days of *Scotland* will be numbred in the Roll of greatest Provocations,

Provocations, because there is no Real and Spiritual Conviction of Sin among us: Custom now hath taken away the Solemnity, and there remaineth nothing but the very Name. Is this the Fast that the Lord chooseth? No, believe it, this shall add to your Provocation, and rather hasten lingring Judgement, than keep it off, we would beseech you this Day, Pray for Pardon of former abused Fasts. If you had no more to Mourn for, this might spend the Day, and our Spirits both, and exhaust all our present Supplications, even the Wall of Partition that stands between God and Scotland, which all our former Solemn Humiliations hath built up, a great deal higher than other Sins could reach.

There is none that calleth upon Thy Name.] Did not this People make many Prayers. *Isa. 1. 15.* before the Captivity? And did they not cry, which Noteth some Fervency in it? And Fast a little before it in *Jeremiah's* time, *Chapter 11. 11. and 14. 12.* in the time of it? *Ezek. 8. 18. Micah 3. 4. Zach. 7. 3.* How then is it that the Prophet now on the Watch-tower looking round about him to take up the Peoples Condition, and being led by the Spirit so far as to the Case of the Captives in *Babel*, can find no Prayer, no Calling? And was not *Daniel* so too? *Dan. 9. 13.* Lo, then here is the Construction that the Spirit of God putteth on many Prayers and Fastings in a Land, *There is none calleth on Thy Name*; There is none that Prayeth Faithfully and Fervently, few to count upon that Prayeth any. It may be there are many Publick-prayers, but who Prayeth in Secret, and mouraeth to God alone? There are many Prayers, but the Inscription is, *To the unknown God*, to a nameless God, your praying is not a calling on His Name, as a known God, and revealed in the Word.

This then we would say unto you, that there may be many prayers in your account, and none in Gods. There are many prayers of Men that God counteth no more of, than the Howling of a Dog.

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Dog. First, The cry of Mens Practices is often louder than their Prayers, and goeth up to Heaven, that the cry of Prayer cannot be heard. When Mens Conversation is flat contrary to their Supplications, Supplication is no calling on His Name, but charming rather. Sodom's abominations had a cry up to God, *Gen. 18. 21.* So *Abel's* Blood had a cry for Vengeance, which *Cain's* Prayers could not out-cry. Thus the Lord would not hear many Prayers, *Isa. 1. 15.* because Hands and Practices were polluted: You that know no Worship of God, but in such a Solemn Duty; your Religion is summed up and confined, within the limits of Temple-worship, Family-exercise and Prayer; Certainly the rest of your Conversation must speak more: God will not hear but such as Worship Him, and do His Will, *John 4. 24.* Your Prayer is a dark Parable, if your Conversation expone it not. This I speak for this end, to put many of you out of your false ground of Confidence: You have nothing but your Prayers to trust unto. And for your Conversation, you never go about it effectually to reform it, but goeth on in that which you pray against: We declare unto you the Truth, your Prayers are Abomination, *Prov. 28. 9.* The Wicked may have Prayers. And therefore think not to please God and flatter Him with your Mouths, when your Conversation is Rebellion: Since you hear not Him in His Commands, God will not hear you in your Petitions, *Prov. 1. 27, 28.* You stopped your Ear at His Reproof, God will stop His Ear at your Request. If you will go to Heaven by your own righteousness, I pray you, follow more after it, make the Garment more to cover your Nakedness: The Skirt of a Duty is not sufficient.

Secondly, When Iniquity is regarded in the Heart, (and Idols set up in God's place,) God will not own such a worship, but sendeth a Man to the Idols he serveth, *Psal. 66. 18. Ezek. 14. 3, 4.* Do you not

not often Pray to God against a Corruption, when your Heart cleaveth unto it, and what your Mouth saith, your Heart contradicteth? Light and Conscience often extort a confession of beloved Sin, while the Temper of the Heart hath this Language, Lord, grant not my Request. And therefore if there be a Prayer for Pardon of Guilt, yet there is no through Resolution to quite the Sin; And as long as a Soul is not resolved to quite the Sin, there can be no ingenuous confession of it, and no prayer for removing the guilt can be heard. You cannot employ Christ in His Office of Mediatorship as a Priest to interceed and offer Sacrifice for Sin, unless you as sincerely employ Him as a Sanctifier and Redeemer. And therefore Prayer that separateth Christ's Offices, and calleth not on whole Christ, calleth not on His Name, for His Name is *Lord Jesus Christ*. How can the Lord be enquired of by such an one who cometh to mock Him, putteth up an Idol in the Heart, and yet prayeth against it, or some other Sin, while he is not resolved to quite it? Shall God be resolute to help, when we are not earnest in seeking it? No wonder God answer you according to the Idol: No wonder you be given up to serve Idols, and your Sin grow upon you as a Plague for your Hypocrisie, when you engage your Heart too much to any Creature, and come to pray and enquire of the Lord in your Necessity, shall it not be righteousness with Him, to send you to your god? *When thou criest, let thy Companies deliver thee, Isa. 57. 13.* O Man! cry unto thy Bosom-idol, and let it help thee, since thou trustest to it, and spendest thy Heart on it, *Deut. 32. 37, 38.* *Where is the god that drink the Wine of your Offerings, and eat the Fat of your Sacrifices? Where is the Creature that you have made your Heart an altar to, to send up the flames of your choicest Thoughts and Affections to it? Let this risen and help you now, saith the Lord. Therefore we Exhort you, if you would have your Prayers a delight, be upright in the thing you seek, and see that you entertain*

ertain no known Sin, give it no Heart-allowance.

Thirdly, There are many Prayers not heard, not known, because the Mouth out-crieth the Heart. It is the Sacrifice of the Contrite Heart that God despiseth not. The Prayers of this People were such, Isa. 29. 13. *They draw near with the Mouth, but the Heart was far away.* It is Worship in Spirit and Truth that God loveth, John 4. 24. Since Prayer is a Communion of God with the Creature, a meeting of one with God, and speaking Face to Face; God who is a Spirit and Immortal, must have a Spirit to meet with, a Soul to speak to him. Now do you not find your Hearts gadding abroad even in Duty? Is it not most about your Corns and Lands in the Time of Solemn Worship? Therefore God getteth no more but a Carcase to keep Communion with; He may have as much fellowship with the Stones of the Wall, and Timber of the House, as he can have with your Ears and Mouths, while you remove your Hearts to attend other things. And I would say more, if your Mind be present, yet your Heart is gone, sometimes, yea often, both are gone abroad: Sometimes the Mind and Thought stayeth, but the Affection and Heart is not with it, and so the Minds residence is not constant: Your Thought may come in as a Way-faring Man, but carrieth not all Night, dwelleth not. Now speak to it, even Christians, may not your Prayers often have a contrary Interpretation to what they pretend? You Pray so coldly and formally, as God will interpret, you have no mind to it: We ask as we seemed indifferent whether our Petitions be granted or not. Should the Lord be affected with your Petitions, when you your selves are not affected much? Should His Bowels of Zeal found within Him, when yours are silent? *It is fervent Prayer availeth much*, Isa. 5. 16. A Heart sent out with the Petition, and gone up to Heaven, cannot but bring back an answer. If Prayer carry not the Seal of the Heart and Soul in it, God cannot

own it, or send it back with His Seal of acceptance.

Fourthly, Many Prayers are not calling on God's Name: And no wonder that when People Pray, yet the Spirit say, *None calleth on Thy Name*, for Prayer is made, as to an unknown God, and God is not taken up according to His Name, which are His Glorious Attributes, whereby He manifesteth Himself in His Word. To Call on God's Name, is so to Pray to God, as to take Him up, as He hath revealed Himself. And what is the Lord's Name? Hear Himself speak to Moses, *Exod. 33. 19. and 34. 6, 7. The Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving Iniquity, and Transgression, and Sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.* Now to call on this Name, is for the Soul in Prayer, to have a suitable stamp on it: Every Attribute of God taking deep impression in the Heart. And so God's Name to be written on the very Petitions: And shortly, we may say, the Spirit should have the impression of God's Greatness and Majesty, of His Goodness and Mercy, of His Terribleness and Justice. This is the order that God proclaimeth His Name into. In the entry the Supplicant should behold the Glorious Sovereignty and Infinite distance between God and the Creature, that he may have the stamp of reverence and abasement upon his Spirit, and may speak out of the Dust, as it becometh the Dust of the Balance and Footstool to do to Him, who sitteth on the Circle of the Heaven as His Throne. And this I must say, there is little Religion and Godliness among us, because every Man is ignorant of God. Even God's Children do more study themselves, and their Condition, than God's Greatness and Aboluteness. Who searches God's Infiniteness in His Word and Works, till he behold a wonder, and be drowned in a Mystery? O but the Saints of old did take up God at a greater distance from the Creatures, they waded far into this boundless Ocean of

God's

God's Majesty, till they were over Head and Ears, and were forced to cry out, *Who can find out the Almighty to perfection?* All these are but Parts of Him, His Back-parts. There is more Real Divinity and Knowledge of God in one of *Job's* Friends Discourses, one of *David's* Prayers, than now in Twenty Sermons of gracious Men, or many Prayers or Conferences of Saints. But withall, you must study His Goodness and Mercy, and this maketh up the most part of His Name; The Definition of God hath most of this, so that it may be said truly, that Mercy is his delight, Mercy (as it were) swelleth over the rest: God were not accessible, unless Mercy did temper it. Behold then Greatness to Humble, and Goodness to make Bold, that you may have access. As Greatness should leaveth the Stamp of Reverence on your Petitions, so should Mercy and Goodness imprint them with Faith and Confidence; And that the rather because as Christ is said to be the Father's Face, and the Image of His Person, 2 Cor. 4. 6, and Heb. 1. 3. So may He be called the Father's Name, and so doth God Himself call Him, Exod. 23. 20, 21. *The Angel that went before them in the Wilderness, whose Voice they ought to obey, His Name is in Him, and this Angel is Christ Jesus, Acts 7. 37, 38.* So then Christ Jesus is God's Name: God as He revealeth Himself in the Word, is *God in Christ reconciling the World unto Himself, 2 Cor. 5. 19.* And therefore, Christians, you ought to Pray always in Christ's Name, and this is to call on His Name. Not only encourage your selves to come to God, because of a Mediator, because He is God in Christ, but also offer up all your Prayers in Jesus his Name, that his Name called on them may Sanctifie them, otherwise your Affectionate Prayers cannot be acceptable to God, for He loveth nothing but what cometh thorow the Son; Prayer must have an evil favour, when it is not put in the Golden Censer, that this Angel hath to offer up Incense with the Prayers of the Saints. And likewise you would

know God's Justice and Wrath, that you may Serve in Fear and Trembling: And when Trembling is joyned with the rejoycing of Faith, this is acceptable Service. You ought to fear to offend His Holiness, while you are before Him. Let God's terribleness have a deep impression on your Spirit, both to make Sin bitter, and to make Mercy more sweet. Thus should Prayer ascend with the Seal of God's Attributes, and then is it a calling on his Name. Now is there any calling on His Name among us? Who maketh it his study to take up God in His Glorious Names? Therefore you call not on a known God, and cannot name Him. Now all of you take this Rule to judge your Prayers by. Think you not that you make many Prayers? You both think it, and say it, as you use to say, I Pray both Day and Night. Nay, but count after this Rule, and there will be found few Prayers in Scotland, albeit you reckon up both Private and Publick. Once scrape out of the count the Prayers of the Profane and Scandalous, whose Practice defileth their Prayers: And again, blot out the Prayers of Mens Tongues and Mouths when Hearts are absent: And again, set aside the Formal, Dwyning, Cold-rise, Indifferent Supplications of Saints, and the Prayers that carry no Seal of God's Name and Attributes on them, Prayers made to an unknown God, And will you find many behind? No certainly, any of you may take up the Complaint in behalf of the Land, *There is none that calleth on Thy Name,* or few to count upon. You may say so of your selves if you judge thus, I have almost never Prayed, God hath never heard my Voice, and you may say so of the Land. This would be a well spent Day, if this were but our Exercise, to find out the Sins of our Duties in former Humiliations: If the Spirit did so Convince you, as to blot out of the Roll of Fasts all the former. If you come this length as to be Convinced solidly, that you have never yet Prayed and Mourned for Sin. I have lived this long, and been babling all this while, I have never
 once

once spoken to God, but worshipped I knew not what, fancied a God like my self, that would be as soon pleased with me, as I was with my self. If the Lord wrought thus on your Hearts, to put you off your own righteousness, you should have more advantage in this than in all your Sabbaths and Fasts hitherto.

Secondly, Altho' the Lord's Hand be upon them, and they fade as a Leaf, and are driven into another Land, yet none calleth on His Name; This maketh the Complaint more lamentable, and no doubt, is looked upon as a dreadful sign and token of God's displeasure, and of sorer Strokes. Daniel an Eye-witness confirmeth this foretold Truth, Chapter 9. 13. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not made our Prayer to the Lord our God.* Well may the Lord make a supposition and doubt of it, *Lev. 26. 40. 41.* After so many Plagues are come on, Seven added to Seven, and again seven times more, and yet they will not be humbled. And when it is even at the Door next to utter Destruction and Consumption, he addeth, *If then their uncircumcised Hearts be humbled, and they take with the Punishment of Sin, &c.* We need ask no reason of this, for *bray a Fool in a Mortar, his folly will not depart from him, Prov. 27. 22.* Poor foolish Man, is a foolish Man, folly is born with him, folly is his name, and so is he. He hath not so much Wisdom as to hear the Voice of the Rod, and him that appointeth it. Poor Ephraim is an undaunted Heifer. Nature is a Bullock unaccustomed with the Yoke, and so it is chastised more and more, *Jer. 31. 18.* Man is like an untamed Beast, as the Horse, or as the Mule. Threatnings will not do it, God speaketh once, yea twice, and Man perceiveth it not, *Job 33. 14.* God instructeth by the Word, and Men receive no Instruction: All the Warnings to flee from the Wrath to come, are as so many Tales to make Children afraid. He saith in his Heart, *I shall have Peace, tho' I walk in the Imagination of my own Heart.* Since therefore he will not incline his Ear to the Word, God sendeth

His Rod to Seal the Word, and yet Men are so wild that they fight with God's Rods, and will not submit to Him: *A Yoke must be put on Ephraim, a Bridle in Mens Mouths*, Psal. 32. 9. They will put God to more pains than speaking, and it shall cost them more pain: For he that will not be drawn with the Cords of a Man, Love and Intreaties, must be drawn with the Cords of a Beast, and yoked in a heavy Yoke. Yet Men are unruly, and the Yoke groweth the heavier, and sorer, that they strive to shake it off. An uncircumcised Heart cannot be humbled. *How can the Leopard change his spots? no more can my People return to me*, Jer. 13. 23. It is strange that a People so afflicted, will not take with the Punishment of their Iniquity, but will say in their Heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? But here it is, how can an uncircumcised Heart be humbled? *God may beat on Men with Rods as on a Dog, but he will run away from him Still the more*, Isa. 9. 13. Nay, it may be, there will be more stirring after God, and more awaking by the first Stroke of Affliction, than when they are continued and multiplied: The unquothness of Rods may effect People something, but when his Hand lyeth on but a little, custom breedeth hardness, and more and more alienateth Spirits from him.

Now we need no more to Seal this Truth, but our own Experience. I think never People might speak more sensibly of it. It hath been the manner of the Lord's dealing with us, to use fair means to gain us, to threaten before he laid on, to give a proclamation before his Stroke; And yet it hath been our manner from our Youth up to harden our selves against Him, and go on in our own way. Therefore hath the Lord after long patience laid on sad Strokes, and smitten us, yet have we not turned to Him. It may be when the Chastisement was fresh and green, some poured out a Prayer, and in trouble visited God, Isa. 26. 18. but the body of the Land hath not known him that smote them, and never ran into their Hiding-place, but the Temptation of the

the Time like a Flood hath carried them away with it. And for the Lord's Children, how soon doth the custom of a Rod, eat out the sense of it, and Prayer doth not grow proportionably to the Lord's Rods. The Lord hath expected that *some might stand in the gap and interceed, yet few or none calleth on His Name.* General Corrections of the Land, have made General Apostacy from God, not a turning into God; So that we may say, we never entered a Furnace, but we have come out with more Dross, contracted Dross in the Fire. Men's Zeal and Tenderneſs hath been burnt up, reprobate Silver may God call us: We have had so much experience of the unprofitableness of former Afflictions, that we know not what the Lord shall do with us. We think it may be the Lord's Complaint of Scotland, *Why should you be afflicted any more? you will revolt more and more.* Isa. 1. 5. What needeth another Rod? You are now all Secure, it is true, because you are not stricken; Nay, but what needeth a Rod? For it cannot awake you, all the Fruit of it would be not to purge away Sin, but to increase it: General Judgements will prove General Tentations, and will alienate you more from me, and make you curse God and the Covenant. And indeed the Truth is, we know not, what outward Dispensation can fall on that can affect this Generation; We know not what the Lord can have behind, that can work on us: Judgement hath had as much Terror, Mercies as much Sweetness, and as much of God in the one and the other, as readily hath been since the beginning of the World. Only this we know, all things are possible to Him, which are impossible to us; And if the Spirit work to Sanctifie the Rod, a more gentle Rod shall work more effectually; His Word shall do as much as His Rod.

The Case we are now into, is just this; *None calleth on Thee.* It is a Terrible one, whether our Condition be good or bad outwardly, our Peace hath left us asleep, and the Word cannot put Men to

Prayers.

Prayers: Now the Lord hath begun to Threaten; as you have been still in fear of new Troubles, and a Revolution of Affairs again, yet I challenge your own Consciences, and appeal to them, whom hath the Word prevailed with, to put to Prayer? Whom hath the rumour of approaching Trouble, put to their Prayers? Whose Spirit hath been affected with God's frowning on the Land? And this yet more aggravateth your laziness; In the time that God doth shew Terrible Things to His People in Ireland, giveth them a Cup of Wormwood, and to drink the Wine of Astonishment: Are not you yet at ease, when your Brethren and Fellow-saints are scattered among you as Strangers? yet your Hearts bleed not. Well, behold the end of it, your Case is a sad prognostick of the Lord's hiding His Face and consuming us. Nay, it is a sure token, that his Face is hid already. When Job's Friends would aggravate his Misery, they sum it up in this, *Thou restrainest Prayer from God:* It is more wrath to be kept from much praying, nor to be scattered from your own Houses. Therefore, if you would have the Cloud of God's Anger that covereth the Land with blackness, go over you, and pour out it self on others, if you would prevent the Rod, hearken to the Word, and stir up your selves to much Prayer; that you may be called His remembrancers? O! how long shall Prayer be banished this Kingdom? The Lord's Controversie must be great with us, for since the Days of our First-love, there hath been great decay of the Spirit of Prayer: The Children of God should be so much in it, as they might be one with it. David was so much in Prayer, as he (in a manner) defined himself by it, Psal. 109. 4. *I gave my self unto Prayer.* In the original, there is no more, but, *I Prayer:* I was all Prayer. It was my Work, my Element, my Affection, my Action. Nay, to speak the Truth, it is the decay of Prayer that hath made all this defection in the Land. Would you know the Original of many a Publick Man's Apostacy and Backsliding in the cause of God, what

what maketh them so soon forget their Solemn Engagements, and grow particular, seeking their own things, untender in seeking the things of God? Would you trace back the Desertion up to the Fountain-head? Then come and see. Look upon such a Man's walking with God in Private, such a Man's Praying, and you shall find matters have been first wrong there. Alienation and Estrangement from God Himself in immediate Duties, and secret approaches, hath made Mens Affections cool to His Interest in Publick Duties. And believe it, the reason why so few great Men, or none are so cordial, constant and thorough in God's Matters, is this, They Pray not in Secret; They come to Parliament, or Council, where Publick Matters, concerning the Honour of God, are to be debated, as any Statesman of *Venice*, would come to the Senate. They have no dependence on God to be guided in these Matters; They are much in Publick Duties, but little in Secret with God: Believe it, any Man's private walking with God, shall be read upon his publick carriage, whether he be Minister or Ruler.

There is yet another thing we would have you consider, to endear this Duty unto you, and bind upon your Consciences, an absolute necessity of being much in it, and it is this, Prayer and calling on His Name is often put for all immediate Worship of God, especially, the more Substantial and Moral Part of Service. This People was much in Ceremonials, and they made these their righteousness. Nay, but there was little Secret Conversing with God, walking humbly with Him, loving Him, believing in Him. Well then, Prayer is (as it were) a compend and sum of all Duties. It contains in it, Faith, Love, Repentance, all these should breath out in Prayer. In a word, if we say to you, be much in Prayer, we have said all, and it is more than all the rest, because it is a more near and immediate approach to God; having more solid Religion in it. If you be lively in this, you are thriving Christians;

Christians; if you wither here, all must decay, for Prayer sappeth and watereth all other Duties with the influence of Heaven.

That stirreth up himself to take hold on Thee] This expresseth more of their Condition under the Rod, and while God was Threatning to depart and leave them, none took so much notice of it, as to awake out of his Dream, to take a fast hold of God. It was but like the grip a Man taketh in his Slumbering, that he soon quiteth in his Sleep. None awaketh himself, as a Bird stirreth up it self with its Wings to flight: None do so spread out their Sails to meet the Wind: This importeth a great Security and Negligence, a careless Stupidity. To take hold, to grip strongly and violently, importeth both Faith Acted on God, and Communion with God, so that the Sense is, No Body careth, whither thou go, there is none that stirreth up himself to take violent hold of Thee; Men ly loose in their Interest, and indifferent in the one thing Necessary, do not strongly grip to it. No Body keepeth Thee by Prayer and Intercession, so that there is no Diligence added to Diligence, there is no stirring up of our selves in Security.

First, When the Lord seemeth to withdraw, and when He is angry, it is our Duty, to take hold the more on Him, and not only to Act Faith, and call on Him by Prayer, but to add to ordinary diligence, it should be extraordinary. *First* then, I say, when the Lord is withdrawing and seemeth angry, we ought not to withdraw from Him by Unbelief, but to draw near, and take hold on Him. And the Lord giveth a Reason of this Himself, Isa. 26. 4. 5. *Because Fury is not in Me.* It is but a Moments Anger, it is not Hatred of your Persons, but Sins, it is not Fury that hath no Discretion in it, to difference between a Friend and an Enemy: It is but at least a Father's Anger, that is not for Destruction, but Correction. The Lord is not implacable, come to Him, and win Him, *Let Him take hold of me, and let Him make peace with me, if he will make peace.*

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He is a God whose Compassions fail not; and so He is never so Angry, but there is room left for Manifestation of Mercy on those that come to Him. God's Anger is not an Humour and Passion as ours is, He can take the poor Child in His Arms, admit it into His Bosom, when outward Dispensations frown. Mens Anger is like the Sons of *Belial*, Briers and Thorns that none may come near to, lest they be hurt, but God angry is accessible, because His Anger is still tempered and mixed with Clemency and Mercy, and that mixture of Mercy is so great, and so predominant in all his Dispensations here, that they being rightly understood, might rather invite to come, than scarr from it, there is more Mercy to welcome, than Anger to drive away.

Secondly, Look upon the very end and purpose of God's hiding Himself, and withdrawing, it is this, That we may come and seek Him early; *Hosea 5. 15.* When God is angry, Mercy and Compassion principlesh it, for Anger is sent out to bring in wanderers: His Anger is not Humour, but resolute and deliberate, walketh upon good grounds. Because *David* in his Prosperity missed not God. When all things went according to his Mind, then he let God go where he will. Therefore, the Lord in Mercy must hide his own Heart with a frowning Countenance, and cover himself with a Cloud, that *David* may be troubled, and so take hold on God, *Psal. 31. 7. 8.* Since then, this is God's purpose, that you may come nearer to Him, and since He goeth away that you may pursue, certainly, He will never so run away as you may not find Him out, nor will He run further, nor He strengthneth thee to pursue Him; Thus, *Psal. 63. 8.* God was flying, and *David* pursuing; Nay, but the flyer giveth Legs to the pursuer, he upholdeth him (as it were) against himself. So did the Angel strengthen *Jacob* to overcome himself. Now shall it not be pleasant to God, that you lay hold on Him as your own, even when He seemeth to be clothed with anger, seeing he changeth his outward Countenance.

tenance for this very end? He seemeth to go, that you may hold, because when you think he stayeth, you hold not, as the Child, while the Nurse is near, will look about it, and take hold of any thing, but when she withdraweth, the Child cleaveth the faster to her.

But *Secondly*, We ought to stir up our selves more now, than any other time: Times of God's withdrawing, calleth for extraordinary and doubled approaches. So Hab. 5. 15. *They will seek me early.* And therefore the Lord's Children in Scripture, have made great advantage of such Dispensations. The Truth is, as long as we are well dealt with, Security creepeth on, and Religion is but in a decaying condition: Duties are done through our Sleep: We are not as Men awaking and knowing what we do, and whither we go. But when the Lord becometh to trouble us, and hides His Face, then it is a time to awake out of Sleep, before all be gone: And there ought to be, *First*, More Diligence in Duties and Approaching to God, because your Case furnisheth more Matter of Supplication; And as Matter of Supplication groweth, Prayer should grow. If Necessity grow, and the cry be not according to Necessity, it is ominous. And therefore *David* useth to make his cry go up according to his trouble. In a Prosperous Condition, tho' every thing might call a Tender Hearted loving Christian to some nearness to God; yet ordinarily, if Necessity press not, Prayer languisheth, and groweth formal. Sense of need putteth an edge on Supplication, whereas Prosperity blunteth it. The Heart missing nothing, cannot go above sublunary things; but let it not have its will here, and the need of Heaven will be the greater. Now, I say, if you fit so many Calls, both from a Command, and from your own Necessities, you do so much the more Sin. *Affliction will make even a Hypocrite seek Him, and pour out a Prayer, and visit him*, Psal. 78. and Isa. 26. And if you do not take advantage of all these pressures, you must be so much the more

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more guilty: And therefore, God (as it were) wondreth at their obstinacy, *They return not to him that smitteth them*: All this is come upon us, yet have we not prayed. And *Secondly*, It is sent for that end, that you may be more serious, and therefore you ought so much the more to awake, to lay hold on Him. This is the way the Lord useth with His secure and wandring Children, *Psal. 119. 67.* For the Lord findeth us often gripping too strongly to a present World; and taking it in our Arms, as if we were never to part with it: Mens Souls cleave to outward accommodations. Therefore the Lord useth to part us and our Idol, that we may take hold of Him the faster. It is Union with Himself, that is our Felicity, and it is that which God most endeavoureth. When he removeth beloved Jewels, it is because they were a Stumbling-block, and divorced the Soul from God: When He seemeth to withdraw Himself, His going proclaimeth so much, Oh! follow, or perish.

Thirdly, It is a very dangerous thing, when He withdraweth, and you follow not, when He is angry, and you care not, doth not flee in to make Peace with Him, certainly His Anger must wax hotter, and Desertion will become a Spiritual Plague. Rods must be tempered with much bitterness. What mixture of Mercy can be in such a Dispensation, where the Fruit of it is to harden? But if the Lord's hardest dealing wrought you to more nearness and Communion with Himself, then certainly you have a fair advantage against the present Trouble, and you have your Cup mixed. You shall at length bless God for such Dispensations, they may be reckoned for good to you. Next, there ought to be more Exercise of Faith, and laying hold on the grounds of Consolation in God, in such a time. 1. For as difficulties grow, Faith should fortifie it self against them so much the more. The greater the Storm be, it should flee the more into the Chambers. Faith in the time of a calm Day getteth no Trial; Faith bulketh much, because

because it hath not much to do. But except there be some fresh and new supplies, it cannot hold out in a Temptation. But it is a singular proof of a Noble and Divine Faith, that can lay hold on Him, and keep Him, when He would go, that can challenge kindness on a miskening Jesus, that can stand on the ground of the Promises, when there is not a Foot-breadth of a Dispensation to build on: While all things go with you, ye have no difficulty to maintain your Faith; Nay, but when the Lord seemeth to look angry, then awake and gather strength, take hold on his strength; Look what is in your Condition, or his Dispensation, what is good or ominous, then take hold on the other hand on him, and look what is in him to answer it, and swallow it up: Ye ought to be well acquainted with the Grounds of Consolation that are in God, in the worst Case, and then ye might lay hold on Him, though He seemed a Consuming Fire. It is then a time that calleth most for securing your Interest in Him, a time when there is no external advantage to beguile you, a time when the only Happiness is to be one with God. Therefore, the Man who in such Calamities and Judgments, is not awaked to put his Eternal Estate out of Question, he is in a Dangerous Case: For do not most part drive over their Days, and have no Assurance of Salvation, they dare not say, either *pro*, or *contra*? It may be, and it may not be. And this is the length that the most part come, a Negative Peace; No Positive Confidence. No clear concluding on sure grounds an Interest. Always ye are most called to this, when God afflicteth the Land, or you: If ye do not then make Peace, it is most dangerous. 2. The Lord loveth Faith in a difficulty best, it is the singleft and the cleanleft, it is that which most honoureth Him, and glorifieth His Truth and Faithfulness, and Sufficiency and Mercy; for then it is most purely Elevated above Creatures, and pitcheth most on God; And therefore bringeth Men to this, *No help*

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for my Soul, but Thou art my Portion. And this commendeth God most, when He is set alone. Prosperity bringeth Him down among Creatures, and secure Faith, maketh little distinction; But a-wakening Faith grippeth strongly and singly, putteth God alone.

Secondly, Oftentimes, when God is departing, none stirreth up himself to lay hold on Him. Altho' there may be Praying and doing of many Duties, yet there is nothing beyond ordinary. The Varieties and Accessions of New Grounds of Supplications doth neither make greater Frequency, nor more Fervency. This our Experience may clear unto us both in Duties and Faith. First, There is very little diligence in seeking of God in the way and means appointed, even when God seemeth to bid farewell to the Land, and go away: No Body cometh in as an Intercessor. Men keep on their old way of Praying, and never addeth to it, come what like. Who is it that riseth above his ordinary, as the Tide of God's Dispensation is? There ought to be such an Impression made by the Changes of God's Countenance, as might be read on the Duties of His People. There should be such a distance between your ordinary and such times, as between a Sleeping-man and a Waking-man, that whatever your Attainment of Access to God be, ye might stir up and go beyond it, according as Matters call. Will God count your Publick Fasts a Performance of this Duty? Alas! we Fast Sleeping, and none stirreth up himself to these things. Is there any difference betwixt your Solemn Humiliation and another Sabbath? And is there any difference between a Sabbath and a Week-day, save the External Duty? Is not this palpably our Case? Is there any wakening among us? No, Security is both the universal Disease and Complaint; And it is become an incurable Disease, since it became a Complaint. Doth any of you Pray more in Private than ye used? Or what edge is on your Prayers? Alas! the Lord will get good leave to go from

from us; It feareth me, that we would give Christ a Testimonial to go over Seas. *Hold Him, hold Him.* Nay, the Multitude would be gladly quite of Him, they cannot abide His Yoke, His Work is a Burden, His Word is a Torment, His Discipline is Bonds and Cords; And what Heart can ye then have to keep Christ? What violence can ye offer to him to hold him still? All your Intreaties may be fair Complements, but they would never rent his Garment. *Secondly*, There is no upstirring to Faith among us, and laying hold on Jesus Christ, albeit all his Dispensations warn us that it is now high time. There are not many who are about this Point effectually, to stir up their Faith, or to secure their Interest. Think ye that Conjectures will carry you thorow Difficulties, The Multitude think they believe much, but any Temptation proveth their mistake. The most part of *Scotland* would deny God and his Son Jesus Christ, if they were put to it. Always it is a time ye would not ly out from your Strong hold, Faith only uniteth you to Christ, and if ye would be kept in any Trial, stir up Faith.

Thirdly, Prayer and Faith, diligence and laying hold on God, must go together, and help one another. Not calling on his Name, and not laying hold on him, go together, and have influence one upon another. *First*, Faith hath Influence on Prayer. Laying hold on God in Christ, will make right calling on his Name, it learneth Men how to call God, to call him, *Abba, Father*. Faith useth to vent it self in Prayer; I say, much consideration of God, and claiming into him, and to the grounds of confidence in him, must both make Prayer acceptable, and carry the stamp and impression of God's Name, or Christ's Name on it, and also make much Prayer: For when a Soul hath pitched on God, as its only Felicity, and thus made choice of him, it findeth in him All-sufficiency, all things for all things; There is no necessity, but it findeth a supply in his fulness for it;

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And therefore it applieth a Man to the Fountain,
 to draw out of the Wells of Salvation. There is
 nothing can be so sweet and refreshing, as for
 such a Soul to pour out it self every Day in him,
 to talk with him Face to Face. Faith engageth
 the Heart to come to God with all things; where-
 as many difficulties would have been, and the se-
 cure or unsettled Heart would have gone as many
 different ways to help them: Faith laying hold
 on God, knoweth but one, and bringeth all here.
 And therefore Access to God is a Fruit of it, *Ac-
 cess unto the Grace wherein we stand by Faith.* And
 again, how can Prayer be acceptable, as long as
 Faith doth not principle it? It is but like a Beast
 groaning under a Barden. Laying hold on God
 Himself, makes a Man's Duties acceptable, because
 he speaks and asks, believing that he shall receive,
 he trusteth God, and doth not tempt him. Where
 lively Faith is not entertained, there cannot be
 much Affection, which is the Oyl of the Wheels.
 There may be in some bitterness of Spirit much
 vehemency, but that is not a pure flame of Divine
 Love that burneth upward to him, and it is soon
 extinguished, and lasteth no longer nor present
 Sense, and then the Soul groweth harder, as Iron
 that had been in the Fire. *Secondly,* When there is
 not much Prayer and Calling, Faith cannot be
 strong and violent; for Prayer is even the Exer-
 cise of Faith, if you wear out of that, Faith rust-
 eth. There may be much quietness with little
 Prayer, but there cannot be much and strong and
 lively Faith; for where it getteth not continual
 employment, it sags. And indeed Prayer is a spe-
 cial point of holding God fast, and keeping Him,
 Therefore joyn these, if ye would thrive in any
 one of them. Your unbelieving complaints are not
 Prayers and Calling on His Name, because they are
 not mixed with Faith. As the Apostle said of the
 Word, so may it be said of Prayer, your Prayers
 are not profitable, are not heard, because not mix-
 ed with Faith. Ye use to doubt, that ye may be
 Fervent,

Fervent, to question your Interest, that ye may stir up your Spirits to Prayer: But alas! what a simply gross mistake is that? Poor-Soul, though thou get more Liberty, shall it be counted Access to God? Though you have more Grief, and your Bitterness doth indite more Eloquence, shall God be moved with it? Know ye not that you should ask without wavering, and lift up pure hands without Wrath and Doubting? And yet both are there.

Fourthly, The Duty we are called to in such a time when God is angry, is to lay hold on Him. We would speak a word more of it: And *First*, We ought to hold a departing Lord, by wrestling with Him in Supplication, *Not to let Him depart till He bless*, Hosea 12 3, 4. The Application of *Jacob's* Victory over the Angel is thus, *Turn ye to the Lord, and wait on Him*, &c. How had *Jacob* power over the Angel? By Supplication and Weeping. So that Prayer is a Victory over God, even the Lord God of Hosts. We ought (as it were) to strive against outward Dispensation; when it saith, He is gone, when our Condition saith, He is gone, or going, we ought to wrestle with it: No Submission to such a departing, I mean, no Submission that sitteth down with it, and is not careful how it be. Now this time calleth you to such an Exercise. The Lord seemeth to be angry with us, there is a strong Cloud over the Land, and like to pour down upon us, the Lord is drawing a Sword again, and beginning now to lay on: Many Threatnings would not put us to Supplication; Now what will the laying on of the Rod do? If the former Days be returning wherein ye saw much Sorrow, Is it not then high time for the Lord's Remembrancers, and for the Lord's Children to wrestle with God? As *Esau* was coming on *Jacob*, so hath God Armed-men, and such desperate Men, as he hath made a Rod to us before. If we be twice beaten with it, it is very just, for before we did not seek into Him who smote us.

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You would know this, that the Lord is but seeking Employment, and if ye would deal with Him, ye may make advantage of the present and future Calamities. And look to this laying hold on him: This is the chief thing ye should now heed. It is God Himself that should be your Principal Object. Praying should be a laying hold on God, it should meet with Himself. For the most part in the Time of Prosperity, we cannot meet with God singly, we have so much to do with Creatures, we keep Trysses so punctually with them, so that we cannot keep with God: We have so many Things in our Affections and Thoughts, that God cannot get place, He cannot get us at leisure for the throng of our Business: We lose God, by catching at Shadows. Well then, we are called in such a Time of Difficulty to come into God Himself, to draw by the Vail of Ordinances, that we may have Communion with God Himself. And this is right Praying, when the Soul getteth such immediat access to God (as it were) to handle him, and see him, and taste him, to exercise its Senses on him. Ordinances have been of a long time a covering of his Face, and he useth not now to unvail himself in the Sanctuary, and let us see his Glory: God is departed from Preaching and Praying, and the Solemn Meeting, so that we meet not with God, we lay hold on a shadow of an outward Ordinance, but not on God himself. Therefore Christians, make advantage of this time, you may be brought to want Ordinances, then lay hold on himself, who is the Substance and Marrow of them. You may be denuded of outward Comforts and Accommodation here, then lay hold on himself in much Prayer. If Affliction would blow away the Cloud on his Face, or would scatter our Idols from us, and make us single alone with God, as Jacob was, it were well sent.

Secondly, Your Exercise should be to take hold on God by Faith. And First, Ye would make Peace with God, be much in direct Acts of apprehending

hending God Himself in Jesus Christ. And this is according as ye take up your selves in your own Misery and Necessity. Do but travel continually between your own Misery and something answerable in God.

The *First* Thing we would have you do now when God Frowns upon us, find out your own lost Condition, and how great strangers you have been to Him, even when ye have approached in many Ordinances; And find a Necessity of making Peace with God and Atonement. Now from this, lay hold on Christ as *the Hope set before you*, look upon that in Him which will answer all your Necessities, and be suitable to them. It is not Matters of outward Lot that should go nearest your Heart: Let the World go where it will, that which concerneth you most in such a time, is the securing your Soul: For if ye lose it, what gain you? What keep you? Your Houses and Lands and Lives may be in hazard: Nay, but one thing is more worth than all these, and in more hazards Begin at Spiritual Things, and ask how Matters stand between God and thee.

Secondly, Not only would ye be much in immediate Application unto Jesus Christ, but ye would so take hold of Him, as ye may be sure ye have Him. Make Peace, and know that ye have made it, and then shall ye be kept in Perfect Peace. You would never rest untill you can on solid grounds answer the Question. And this Duty is called for from you at such a Time, *for the Just shall live by Faith*, in a Troublesome Time, *Hab. 2. 4.* And as ye ought to keep and hold fast Confidence, and not cast it away in such a Time, so should ye all seek after it: Do not only rest in this, I know not but I may belong to Christ, I dare not say against it. O no Christians, you should have positive clear grounds of Assurance, *I am his, and he is mine. I know that my Redeemer liveth. God is my Portion.* And if ye conclude thus solidly, I defy all the World to shake and trouble you

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your Peace: This is Perfect Peace, *Peace, peace*, double Peace. How can you choose but be shaken at every blast of Temptation, when you are not thus solidly grounded, when you hold not at your Anchor?

And *Thirdly*, Having thus laid hold on Christ, as your own, lay hold on all in Him as yours, and for your use. Whatever difficultie the present Time, or your own Condition afford, search but as much in God, as may counterbalance it. Answer all Objections, from His Mercy, Goodness, Power, Wisdom, Unchangeableness: And this shall be more nor the Trouble: God Himself laid hold upon, and made ours, is more nor removing a Temporal Calamitie. It is an Eternal weight, to weigh down all Crosses and Disappointments. For what can present things be? Is there not in the Favour of His Countenance, that which may drown them in Oblivion? Are ye like to sink here? Is not God a sure Anchor to hold by? And if you do not this, your Trouble is nothing in respect of the Danger of your Soul. Secure and loose lying out of God, not putting this Matter to a full Point, is worse nor all your outward fading. Therefore we exhort you in the Lord's Name, to flee into this Name of the Lord, as a strong Tower to run to and be safe. When the Lord seemeth now to be angry with us, run not away from Him, though He should yet clothe Himself with Vengeance as a Garment.

But *First*, O ye poor People, who have never asked this Question, Whether have I any Interest in Jesus? Ask it now, and resolve it in Time. If Trouble come on, if Scattering and Desolation come on, and our Land fade as a Leaf, certainly the Lord's Anger will drive you away. What will ye do in the Time of His Indignation? All of you put this to the Trial, how Matters stand between God and you?

And *Secondly*, If ye find all wrong, do not sink

in Discouragement; All may be amended, while it is seen wrong in Time. Nay, GOD taketh away outward Accommodation, to make you more Serious in this. And it is the very Voice of Rods, every one flee into your Hold, every one make Peace with me. You make take hold, and do it feckfully.

Thirdly, You who have fled to JESUS, take more hold of Him; you are called also to renew your Faith, and begin again: Make Peace with GOD, let your Confidence be kept fast, and thus shall ye be immoveable, because He changeth not. GOD will not go from you, if ye believe, hold Him by Faith. CHRIST could not do great things in Galilee, because of their Unbelief, and so He departed from them. As Unbelief maketh an Evil Heart, to depart from the GOD of all Life and Consolation: So doth it make GOD depart from us. But Faith casteth a knot upon Him (to speak with reverence) it fastneth Him by His own Word and Promise, and He cannot go by it. It is a violent hand laid on GOD. I will not let thee go till thou blest me.

Fourthly, Faith and Prayer, or holding of GOD, by believing in Him, and much imploying Him, needeth much stirring up unto, and awaking. *That stirreth up himself to take hold on Thee.* Security is the Moth of both these, and eateth out the Life of Faith and Supplication: It maketh Prayer so coldrise, that it cannot prevail, and Faith so weak, that it cannot use violence. *First,* Security apprehendeth no evil, no need. A Secure Condition is a Dream, that one is eeing, and yet his Soul is empty. Look how the People of *Lais* were quiet and secure, apprehending no evil; Destruction cometh then on as an Armed Man. Always, it is much Necessity that administers fewel to a Man's Faith, and Supplication. *David,* Psal. 30. 6. *I said in my Prosperity, I shall not be moved.*

moved. Nay, but many say in Adversity, and cry, *Peace, peace,* where no Peace is. Security pleadeth Innocency, and then believeth Immunity. *I am Innocent, therefore shall His Anger turn away,* Jer. 2. 35. Security applieth not Sin, and so refuseth the Curse of Sin, and Wages of it. And thus is a Man in his own Eyes, *a lord, and then he will come no more to God,* Jer. 2. 31. It is almost impossible to awake Men by general Judgements, to apprehend Personal danger, and Men never stir out of their Nest, till it be on Fire. We can behold, or hear of our Neighbours Spoiling, and Violence done to them, but till the Voice of a cry be heard in our own Streets and Fields, no Body will take the Judgement to themselves. It is well said, that which is spoken to all, is spoken to none, so what is done to all in general, is done to none. The Voice of a General Rod, speaketh not Particularly, and maketh not Men apprehensive of sad things, and thus Men are not pressed unto Prayer, are not put out of themselves; It is only Necessity that Saps the Roots of it, and makes it green. *Secondly,* Security is lazy, and not active, putteth not forth its hand to work, and so dieth a Beggar, for, *only the Hand of the Diligent maketh Rich.* Laying hold on GOD is a Duty that requireth much Spirit in it: Men do not grip things well in their Slumbering. There is no Duty that needeth so Spiritual and Lively Principles. If a Man do not put on such a piece of resolution and edge upon him, he cannot come to the wrestling of Prayer, and violence of Faith. Although the Exercise and Acting of Grace dependeth more upon the Spirit of God, his present Influence, than upon the Soul of Man, yet this is the way the LORD communicateth His Influence, by stirring up and exciting the Creature to its Duty, as if it could do it alone. Grace is one thing,

and the stirring up of it is another thing: For when we ly by and Sleep over our Time, and go not about the Matter so seriously, as it were Life and Death, it is but a weak hold we can take of GOD. According to the measure of a Man's apprehending Necessity, and according to the measure of his Seriousness in these Things, so will the Hand of Faith grip, and lay hold with more or less violence. As a Man Drowning, will be put from Sleeping, and when one is in extreame hazard, all his strength will unite together in one, to do that which at any ordinary Time it could not do, so ought it to be here. A Christian Assaulted with many Temptations, should unite his Strength, and try the yondmost. O but your whole Spirits would run together, to the Saving of your self, if ye were very apprehensive of Necessity. The Exercise of Faith is a dead grip, that cannot part with what it grippeth. Therefore *First*, We must say to you, it is not so easie a thing as you believe, to lay hold on GOD, there must be stirring up to it. And when the LORD speaketh of our stirring our selves, certainly He meaneth this likeways, that He must stir us, ere we stir our selves. *Secondly*, Above all, be afraid of a Secure Condition: It is the Enemy of Communion with GOD, and Spiritual Life; therefore look about you, and apprehend more your Necessity, and then give no rest and quietness to your self, till you have imployed and engaged Him; Be as Men fleeing, to lay hold on the Refuge set before you. *Thirdly*, It must be a Time of little Access to GOD, and little Faith, when we are all Secure, and no Body goeth about Religion as their Work and Business. We allow our self in it. Therefore we do Exhort you *First*, To purpose this as your end to aim at, and purpose by GOD's Grace to take

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more hold of G O D. There is little minding of Duty, and that maketh little doing of it: Once engage your Hearts to a love and desire of more of this, come to a Point of Resolution. I must know Him more, and trust more in Him, be more acquaint with Him. And *Secondly*, Put your self in the way of Duty. It is G O D that only can stir you up, or apply your Hearts to the using of violence to G O D: But ye would be found in the outward Means much, and in these ways G O D will meet with you, if you wait on Him in them.

For Thou hast hid Thy Face from us] Here is the greatest Plague, a Spiritual Plague. The last Verse was but the beginning of Sorrows, *We all do fade, &c.* But lo, here the accomplishment of Misery, G O D *hiding His Face*, and consuming them in the hand of their Sins. *First*, The L O R D's hiding of His Face, and giving up a People to melt away in their Sins, punishing with judicial Blindness and Security, is the worst Judgement, it filleth the Cup full. This Complaint goeth on still worse. And certainly, it is worse, nor their fading as a Leaf, and exile out of their Land. It is not without Reason, that great Troubles and Afflictions are so expressed, *Thou hid Thy Face*. As David said, *Thou hidst Thy Face, and I was troubled*; Importing as much, as it is not Trouble that doth Trouble, but G O D's hiding of His Face that maketh Trouble trouble. It is in so far Trouble, as it is a Sign of His Displeasure, and as the Frowns of His Countenance are upon it. Therefore, the Saints aggravating their Affliction, say, *Thou hidest Thy Face*. You know the Face is the place whereinto either kindness, or unkindness appeareth. The L O R D's Countenance, or Face, is a refreshful sweet Manifestation of Himself, to a Soul; It is the L O R D using Familiarity

with a Spirit, and this made *David* more glad nor Corn and Wine. Now the hiding of the Face, the withdrawing of His Countenance is, when the LORD in His Dispensation and Dealing doth withhold the Manifestation of Himself, either in Life or Consolation: When He covereth Himself with Clouds round about, that neither can a Soul see into the backside of it, into his own warm Heart, nor can the Sun-beams shine thorow, to quicken and refresh the Soul. The LORD draweth over His Face, a Vail of a crossing Dispensation, or such like.

There is a Desertion of the Soul in the Point of Life and Spiritual Action, and there is a Desertion in regard of Consolation. The varieties of the LORD's Desertions run upon these two. As a Christian's Life is Action or Consolation, and the LORD's Influence is either Quickning or Comforting; so His withdrawing is either a prejudice to the one or the other. Sometimes he goeth Mourning all the Day, nay, but he is Sick of Love: Sometime he is a Bottle dried in the Smoke, and his Moisture dried up. The Christian's Consolation may be substracted, and his Life abide, but he cannot have Spiritual Consolation, if he be not Lively. This Life is more Substantial, Comfort is more refreshing; Life is more solid, Comfort sweet, that is True growing solid Meat, this but Sauce to eat it with.

The hiding here meant is certainly a Spiritual Punishment. The LORD denying unto this People Grace to understand the Voice of the Rod, He appearing as a Party against them, leaving them to their own Carnal and Ragie Temper, and thus they lay still under GOD's Displeasure. Now there is nothing like this, First, Because it is a Spiritual Punishment, and Estates are not to be valued and laid in the

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Balance with the Soul. Albeit Men are become so brutish as to abase their Souls, and prostitute them to any thing, yet all a Man hath, is not considerable to it. *Secondly*, It is a more excellent thing is removed by it, *In His Favour is Life*: All Felicity and Happiness is in GOD's Countenance. If a Man have not this, what hath he else? Losses are according as the thing is. Nay, but here is more, *My LORD is taken from me, my GOD hath forgotten me*. And indeed, if Man's True Happiness be in Communion with GOD, certainly, any Interruption coming in must be sad, and make a Man more Miserable than the World knoweth. There is a greater Emphasis in that Word, *Thou hast hid Thy Face*, than if he had said, All the World hideth their Face, and maketh a Scorn of us.

Therefore, *First*, Know, what is the worst Thing of the Times. Many of you think Sword and Pestilence, and the Burdens of the Time, the worst Things, and if you were now to complain, the saddest Complaint would be, Affliction is laid on our Loyns. But know this, if your Cities were desolate, if your Land were made a Wilderness, and we Captives in another Land, there is yet a worse thing than all these, and think you not this strange? Nay, I say, there is something worse already in us, that we know not of, and it is this, *Make the Hearts of this People hard*. A Spirit of Slumber and Deadness from the LORD upon the Land: There are Multitudes He will never shew His Face unto; it is still Vailed from them, and they know Him not. Ye that think all were well, if ye had Peace and Prosperity, and know no hiding of GOD's Countenance, no Anger but when He striketh, certainly you know not what His Countenance is, by all these things.

Men

*M*en neither know Love nor Hatred. Secondly, Whatever Calamity come upon you outwardly, deprecate most Spiritual Plagues, and G O D's Deserting. If you have G O D's Countenance, it may make you glad in much sadness. You would be most careful lest any Partition-wall come in, lest His Countenance change on you, if you grieve His Spirit, and break His Heart. Seek to have His Face to shine, and this shall be a Sun *with Healing under his Wings*. O but CHRIST's Countenance is comely, when it is seen without Clouds; but often it is overclouded with much provocation.

Secondly, The LORD's hiding of His Face, hath Influence on the Temper of Spirits, and Disposition in Duties. The Truth is in general, *In Him we Live, and Move, and have our Being*: And more especially, in many things that is Spiritual, we are of our selves able to do nothing. The Creatures Holiness, and especially our Life, is but as the Rays that the Sun of Righteousness sendeth forth round about him, and if any thing come between, it vanisheth: As the Marigold that openeth its Leaves when the Sun riseth, and closeth when it goeth down again, so exactly doth our Spiritual Constitution follow the Motions of his Countenance, and depend wholly on them, *Thou hides Thy Face, and they are Troubled*, Psal. 104. 9. The LORD needeth no more but discountenance us, and we are gone.

Always, *First*, Be more dependent Creatures; we use to Act as from Habits within, without any Subordination to the LORD's Grace without us, but we find that our Sufficiency is not of our self. How often doth your Spiritual Condition change on you in an Hour? You cannot command one Thought of G O D, or Act from any Habit of Grace even then when you

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you can bring forth other Gifts in Exercise. Ye find that Grace findeth more Difficulties, more Interruptions, therefore learn to attend the Changes and Motions of His Countenance.

Secondly, When you find your Heart Dead, and you concluded under an impossibility of taking hold on GOD in a lively manner, then I pray you, look unto the LORD's suspending of His Influence, and let your whole Endeavours be at the Throne of Grace to help it: It will not be your own provoking of your self to your Duty, but you must put your self upon GOD, that He may cause His Face to shine.

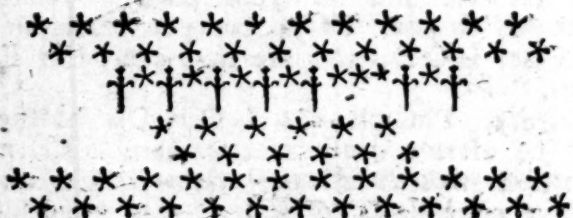
Thirdly, Though the LORD's hiding His Face be often a cause of our Deadness, and His Desertion maketh all to wither, yet we have often a culpable hand in it: And He hides His Face, being provoked so to do. One thing we may mention; Grieving of the Holy Ghost whereby we are Sealed, Quenching the Motions of the Spirit, maketh the Spirit cover his Face with a Vail, and hide it. There is here ordinarily a Reciprocal or Mutual Influence. Our grieving Him, makes Him withdraw His Countenance, and His withdrawing His Countenance, maketh us to wither and grow barren.

Fourthly, The most sure and infallible token of the LORD's hiding His Face, is Security, and a Spirit of Deadness and Laziness; when Folk go about Duties Dreaming, and do all (as it were) throw their Sleep. Therefore we may conclude sad things on this Land, that the LORD hideth His Face from us.

And.

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And therefore arise, and do not settle and quit
your selves in such a Condition: The LORD
is Angry, needeth any more be said? No more
needeth to kind Children: but the Rod must
follow this to make Anger sensible.



FINIS.



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